



तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

SANTINIKETAN  
VISWA BHARATI  
LIBRARY

3249

693













COLLECTED ESSAYS OF PHILIP GUEDALLA

IV

STILL LIFE



# HODDER & STOUGHTON'S PEOPLE'S LIBRARY

General Editor: SIDNEY DARK

## H&S

PLANT LIFE . . . . .	Grant Allen
HOW TO UNDERSTAND PHILOSOPHY . . . . .	E. Baker
CARDINAL NEWMAN . . . . .	Canon William Barry
THAT BODY OF YOURS . . . . .	Dr. W. Bayton
ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI . . . . .	G. C. Chesterton
THE EVERLASTING MAN . . . . .	G. C. Chesterton
WHAT I SAW IN AMERICA . . . . .	G. K. Chesterton
ST. TERESA . . . . .	Mrs. Cecil Chesterton
HOW TO ENJOY LIFE . . . . .	Sidney Dark
QUEEN ELIZABETH . . . . .	Sidney Dark
THE RENAISSANCE . . . . .	Sidney Dark
THE GREATEST BOOK IN THE WORLD . . . . .	T. H. Darlow
HOW TO READ HISTORY . . . . .	W. Watkin Davies
HOW TO ENJOY THE BIBLE . . . . .	Canon Anthony C. Deane
JESUS CHRIST . . . . .	Canon Anthony C. Deane
VICTORIAN POETRY . . . . .	John Drinkwater
THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD . . . . .	Henry Drummond
THE LIFE OF THE FLY . . . . .	J. H. Fabre
THE LIFE OF THE SPIDER . . . . .	J. H. Fabre
ADVENTURES IN FRIENDSHIP . . . . .	David Grayson
MEN OF LETTERS (Collected Essays, Vol. I) . . . . .	Philip Guedalla
MEN OF AFFAIRS (Collected Essays, Vol. II) . . . . .	Philip Guedalla
MEN OF WAR (Collected Essays, Vol. III) . . . . .	Philip Guedalla
STILL LIFE (Collected Essays, Vol. IV) . . . . .	Philip Guedalla
FOLDED HANDS . . . . .	Richard Kín
DR. JOHNSON AND HIS CIRCLE . . . . .	Robert Lynd
COAL AND ITS STORY . . . . .	E. A. Martin
OUR DEBT TO GREECE AND ROME . . . . .	E. B. Osborn
THE MIDDLE AGES . . . . .	E. B. Osborn
SOME THINGS THAT MATTER . . . . .	Lord Riddell
HOW TO ENJOY THE OLD MASTERS . . . . .	Frank Rutter
THE POETRY OF ARCHITECTURE . . . . .	Frank Rutter
NERVES IN DISORDER . . . . .	Dr. A. T. Schofield
A PEOPLE'S LIFE OF CHRIST . . . . .	Archdeacon Paterson Smyth
THE GOSPEL OF THE HEREAFTER . . . . .	Archdeacon Paterson Smyth
ATOMS AND ELECTRONS . . . . .	J. W. N. Sullivan
EVERYDAY BIOLOGY . . . . .	Professor J. Arthur Thomson
HOW TO ENJOY THE COUNTRYSIDE . . . . .	Marcus Woodward
HOW TO ENJOY WILD FLOWERS . . . . .	Marcus Woodward

HODDER & STOUGHTON

## H&S

LIMITED, LONDON, E.C.4

# STILL LIFE

BY  
PHILIP GUEDALLA

H&S

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
LIMITED LONDON

These Essays were first published in book form in *Supers and Supermen* (1920), *Masters and Men* (1922), and *A Gallery* (1923).

*Made and Printed in Great Britain.*  
*Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ltd., London and Aylesbury.*

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FEZ . . . . .	7
MEQUINEZ . . . . .	15
BIARRITZ . . . . .	23
KING'S BENCH WALK . . . . .	33
THE UNION . . . . .	41
MONS—GALLIPOLI . . . . .	47
TWO PRINCES . . . . .	61
A GRAND DUCHESS . . . . .	69
SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES . . . . .	77
AN ARCHBISHOP . . . . .	95
A SOLICITOR. . . . .	101
A FABIAN . . . . .	109
A JURIST . . . . .	117
AN AMERICAN . . . . .	123

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
SOME ZIONISTS . . . . .	131
FLOWER O' THE LILY . . . . .	145
SOME LAWYERS . . . . .	159
LADY HAMILTON . . . . .	167
A WHIG PRINCESS. . . . .	173
THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE . . . . .	189
K. . . . .	195
RONALD POULTON . . . . .	209

## FEZ

SOMEWHERE in the town a drum was throbbing. The little pulse of sound seemed to go straight up in the silence over the city, like a tall thread of wood smoke into a windless sky. But all round the great place lay out in the still sunshine; and the grey hills, where the olive-trees climb up into the Middle Atlas, looked down on Fez. There is something, a little alarming about a city without a sound. When one stands above a town in the West, there is always a striking of clocks, a dull thunder of wheels, or the sudden yell of an engine. But down in the little streets, which wind through Fez, there is no traffic beyond men on foot and sheeted women and the faint click of ambling mules

## STILL LIFE

and little donkeys that brush their loads against the walls on either side. That is why scarcely a sound drifts up, as you look out across the city.

It is a grey, congested heap of square-topped houses, filling a whole valley, climbing the little hills, and huddled behind the shelter of the city walls. Tall towers stand up out of the mass, where the *muezzin* goes up between the city and the sky to quaver out the hours of prayer; and beyond the minarets one catches the sudden green of a great roof of tiles. But the memory that will remain is of a heaped, great waste of houses lying silent in the sun. As one stared, it seemed to stare silently back; and somewhere in the town a solitary drum was throbbing.

The little alleys wind in and out among the houses. Sometimes they vanish into tunnels

## FEZ

under the piled city, or pick their way across the chessboard shadows of a reed-roofed market. The blue sky comes suddenly round corners, and swarming streets end in the little hill-streams which pour through Fez. There is a sound of rushing water everywhere in the city. It goes whispering under humped Moorish bridges and mutters like a stage conspirator in little strangled tunnels below the heaped grey houses. The great town had seemed so silent from the hills above. But down in the maze, where the veiled women slip discreetly by in the half-darkness of the streets, it is alive with little sounds. Whispering water, the slow lilt of men at work, snatches of high, wailing, minor plainsong (Spain learnt its music at the knees of Africa), low chants from little schools, the tapping hammers of the copper-smiths are all caught between the tall blind



## STILL LIFE

walls ; and the hooded men crouch talking at every corner. The men and the water all talk low. Perhaps that is how Fēz muttered ten years ago, before it came yelling down the little streets to murder stray, bewildered Frenchmen in the massacres. In Fez one can never quite forget that spring.

But one day the grey city made remarkable holiday. It shut up shop in the early afternoon and went pouring westward up the hill in its best kaleidoscopic clothes. The tide of traffic set steadily towards the Palace gates. Soldiers, great droves of women, elegant young gentlemen on mules streamed up the little alleys, as tall negroes went elbowing through the press ; and solemn citizens, who lie all day in little cupboards three feet square to sell a pinch of green tea for a copper and an hour's conversation, abandoned the excitements of commerce for

## FEZ

the keener joys of spectacle. His Shereefian Majesty was on the road from Rabat ; and was it not fitting that his city of Fez should receive the Sultan at the gates ? From the great square before the Palace there was a steady roar, and the gorged 'streets still poured late-comers into the mass. They stood and pushed and shouted ; and sometimes, discarding all false dignity, they swept through the crowd, fifteen abreast, arms linked, knees up, and singing to the steady thunder of their little earthenware drums. Above and behind them were the gates whose great square battlements had so alarmed the romantic imagination of M. Pierre Loti ; and somewhere in the middle loud arguments and a faint gleam of bayonets indicated that anxious French officers still hoped to keep a road open for the procession.

Royalty was late. But Fez resorted freely

## STILL LIFE

to the consolations of song and dance. Rings formed in the crowd ; and the little drums throbbed without ceasing, as indomitable loyalists jiggled steadily up and 'down in line, and hillmen in circles sang interminable choruses. Then a gun spoke from the green fort beyond the town, and the heads all turned to the roadway between the bayonets.

There was something odd about that procession from the first. It opened with four closed cars, which glided in perfect silence and with drawn blinds up to the Palace. There was a roguish intimation that these contained a selection of the Imperial harem ; and we gathered from the small number that Majesty was making only a short stay in Fez. Followed four open cabs, containing (one heard it with a mild thrill) the Keepers of the Door, come straight from the Arabian Nights to guard the Sultan's

## FEZ

harem. The misleading art of Ballet had taught one to believe that these figures of romance would wear a vivacious, almost a festal air; and to the heated Western imagination those four cab-loads of dejected men in pointed red fezzes were a 'bitter blow. The Sultan of Morocco seemed to have neglected the opportunities afforded to him by M. Bakst. Eunuchs in cabs. . . . One waited gloomily to see a station-omnibus full of mutes with bow-strings. But the salutes were still thudding from the battery on the hill, and the infantry in the road sprang suddenly to the "Present." There was a clatter of horses under the great gates; and a stream of men in white went riding by with long five-foot flint-locks from the Sûs, sitting the great coloured saddles stiffly with feet driven well home into their square stirrups.

## STILL LIFE

Then the colours changed, and negro lancers jingled past in red. Pennons, black faces, scarlet tunics took the procession to the border-line of opera. There was a pause ; and a band launched into the ceremonial discords that are reserved for royal ears. The crowd was roaring in the square ; and when it paused for breath, the shrill *you-you-you*, which squeals for victory or drives men on to kill, came from the women in their corner. The French guns spoke slowly from the battery ; and down in the road, at the centre of the din, a grave bundle of white linen moved deliberately through the noise and watched with unseeing eyes the prostrations of anxious Kaid. For the Sultan had come into his city of Fez.

## MEQUINEZ

No one, it would seem, has fairly estimated the indebtedness of architecture to lunatics. Most palaces and several towns owe their present form to the dementia of royal persons ; but the obligation, so far as one can judge from the forbidding sanatoria which decorate the main railway approaches to London, has been repaid in the most niggardly fashion. Architecture has not yet discharged its debt to madness, although in some of its latest manifestations there is ground for hope that the time is not far distant. Perhaps all builders are a little mad. There is inevitably something rather inhuman in their strange passion for permanence ; and if one goes among the makers

## STILL LIFE

of great buildings—Cheops, Caracalla, Louis XIV, Mr. Jabez Balfour—one must expect to keep queer company. But there is none madder than the mad old man who is to be met behind a great gate in Mequinez. The comforting words of the Prophet traverse it in curly black letters, and its green tiles take the evening sun and turn to a dull blaze of gold. There is an opulence about the Bab Mansour that is more than Moroccan, that is almost Indian, in the spread of its colours and the reticulated wealth of its inlay. But, beyond it, is a queer waste of ruins, of crumbling arches, of flaked and corrupting walls, where a strange old man once sat among the builders and watched his Palace mounting. It is a shoddy ruin that moulders round the green grass of Mequinez. There is something ignoble about the decay of cheap constructions, and one is

## MEQUINEZ

less impressed than saddened by the sight : Macaulay's New Zealander will know the feeling.

The supreme bitterness of it is that the old man lived for his buildings. Slave labour, great Roman columns, the revenues of Morocco, and Christian prisoners taken under every flag by the Sallee pirates were all poured into the work ; and Mulai Ismail crouched in the shade, as the stones swung into place. Sometimes he worked in the long line of chanting slaves or ate his *cousscouss* among the brick-heaps. That Sultan, with his women and his negro guard and his seven hundred sons, was a singular intrusion of the fabulous East into the polite age of Louis XIV. The two of them were palace-builders. But while fine ladies were admiring the elegant proportions of Versailles, far away to the South Mulai Ismail was riding out under his



## STILL LIFE

new arches to keep order in Morocco. He kept it with a black army, a strict adherence to the Word, and a personal aptitude for killing which rose to strange heights of homicidal virtuosity. But they said, whilst he reigned in Mequinez, that a woman or a Jew could travel without fear from Oudjda to Taroudant. The fierce patriarchal old man seemed to have lingered on in the world from the Crusades. Yet whilst he lived in a region that lay somewhere between the Book of Joshua and the Arabian Nights, bold engravers in Paris were essaying his portrait—*Roy de Maroc, Fez, Tafilet et Autres Provinces, Ports, et Villes Maritimes dans la Mauritanie en Affrique*—and Europe looked on with round eyes at the Sultan who had put the English out of Tangier. A nervous gentleman from Versailles counted, during a mission of three weeks, forty-seven decapita-

## MEQUINEZ

tions by the sovereign to whom he was accredited; and the embarrassed Consul at Sallee informed his blushing Government that the blood royal of Morocco had received thirty-five additions in forty days. Yet this indomitable fragment of Oriental mythology lived in intermittent contact with the world of Saint-Simon and Mr. Pepys. With a strange access of gallantry the old man once addressed to Versailles a polite application for the addition of a French princess to his collection, which was already extensive. His request was not inspired by that spirit of wanton connoisseurship in which his successors have imported bicycles and gramophones, but by grave motives of policy. Versailles was mildly entertained; but there is no record of the feelings of the little palace-builder in the tall peruke when the request arrived. All that is known is that he disap-

## STILL LIFE

pointed his brother of Morocco, and the Princesse de Conti never rode over the hills and down the long road from the sea to Mequinez.

But his great achievement was theological. In the late years of the Seventeenth Century it came to the interested ears of the old Sultan that a dismal King of England was living at Saint-Germain. His misfortunes, it seemed, were attributable to his religious opinions; and with the ready tactlessness of a born missionary Mulai Ismail hastened to correct them. The fierce old man prepared to rejoice Islam with the conversion of James II. This praiseworthy effort was confided to an admirable letter with a gilt border and a large gold seal. It opened with an encouraging reference to the divine inspiration of Charles II, whose evacuation of Tangier was bravely attributed to his conviction

## MEQUINEZ

of the spiritual superiority of Islam. His brother was incited by this shining example of Moslem piety in the House of Stuart to consider favourably the revelation of Mahomet. Feeling that his reader might hesitate to demean the royal dignity by a conversion, the eager old missionary at Mequinez hopefully adduced the examples of the Negus of Abyssinia and the Emperor Heraclius. For the dismal pietist in black velvet at Saint-Germain might surely be persuaded by a letter from Mulai Ismail, if the great Emperor of Byzantium had once respected a letter from the Prophet, a letter which (Islam believed the tale) was carefully kept in a gold casket and had passed from Rome in its decline to France, and was now the talisman of French success under Louis XIV.

The argument proceeded gravely with a wealth of learning. A crowded programme

## STILL LIFE

for the Day of Judgment was indicated in lively detail; and the King's taste for Popish idols was gravely reprobated, by the austere Moslem. He was urged, in default of a conversion to Islam, to revert to the simpler Protestant beliefs of "the sect of Henric" and to accept the generous aid of a Moorish army, which would raise the green standard on the English coast and restore him, by the grace of Mulai Ismail, to his throne. For Dutch kings were distasteful to the sovereign of the Sallee pirates. But James never saw the joke: monarchs in exile rarely do.

## BIARRITZ

1856

IN the days when regimental bands reverently played *Partant pour la Syrie* and a frivolous generation believed the ancients to be lightly-clad individuals who used Empire furniture and sang the delightful airs of M. Offenbach, the Villa Eugénie stood on the little slope by the lighthouse. There was a sentry-box at the corner from which the *piou-piou*, in the intervals of presenting arms to his Imperial master, could watch the big waves breaking on the brown rocks beyond the harbour; and a red roof sheltered, with suitable dignity, the *villeggiatura* of the dynasty.

They had come down overnight from Paris,

## STILL LIFE

just like anybody else. But the train was a marvel of mechanical ingenuity. There was positively a passage—*un pont suspendu*—between the coaches ; and whilst the intrepid engine-driver maintained a dizzy speed in the darkness, they walked in to dinner as though they had all been at the Tuileries. Perhaps the table was a trifle narrow ; and the short gentleman with a large waxed moustache, who sat at one corner, had only just enough room for his plate. But it was a silver plate. And everyone ate cold bird and talked at the top of their voices, until the ladies retired. Then the short gentleman lit a cigarette and invited the others to smoke their segars. Later on he walked down the train to a saloon ; and the rest, adopting peculiar travelling-caps, settled down for the night in the upholstered, but still angular, corners of armchairs. In the

## BIARRITZ

dark hours a lovely lady with sloping eyebrows stood and smiled at them through a glass door. It was not the sad, perpetual smile of ceremony, but a laughing smile ; since she had come along the train on purpose to laugh at them all asleep. They stumbled to their feet with sleepy courtesy ; and as she walked back to her saloon, she warned them archly that they must not return the compliment—*les représailles n'étaient pas permises*.

The rest of the night passed somehow ; and on the next evening they were all by the sea-side at the Villa Eugénie. Sometimes they drove ; sometimes (under medical advice) they bathed ; sometimes they suffered agonies of *mal de mer* in little boats. In the morning they strolled on the terrace under the anxious observation of stern policemen in vast top-hats and long frock-coats ; and



## STILL LIFE

in the evening they sat in the Villa whilst the Emperor read aloud to them—he was sometimes very comical and said things which the author had not written at all. That was not the year when Mr. Home, the gifted medium, thrilled them all so much; and their entertainments lacked any super-natural aid. Sometimes there was a little dance, and the quadrille vied with the *Boulangère* and the *Carillon de Dunkerque* for their delight. One night the Emperor, with all his decorations on, sang them a solo; and once or twice they all tried to convince the little doctor that tables turned because of spirits or the electric fluid. But the best of all was when a smiling lady, after her bathe, walked in the sunshine on the sands. She had dressed in a little tent, and then—*l'Impératrice se promène sur la plage en robe blanche*. . . . The sunshine of 1856 has faded, and her sands

## BIARRITZ

are a common playground. But sometimes, perhaps, when a slow moon comes up over the Bay and the pale waves ride silently to shore, *l'Impératrice se promène sur la plage en robe blanche.*

1892

The big Biscayan rollers pounded the coast with the relentless action of a bad public speaker with a single point. They came on from America in long lines; and they swept over the broken sandstone reefs like a Cabinet minister over an interruption. Sometimes they went up in white Gothic spires under the pale winter sunshine; and sometimes they streamed off a rock in thick green stalactites. But there was a monotony about their attack. They insisted; they restated with added emphasis; they put their point in long, sonorous undulations.

## STILL LIFE

Once or twice, as the land-wind caught their crests, they almost seemed to fling back a white head and deal magisterially with an interrupter. They really behaved (perhaps it was a compliment to his presence on the coast) surprisingly like Mr. Gladstone.

The party were all at the large, comfortable hotel at the corner by the dressmaker's. One could rely on Mr. Armitstead for that. Mr. G. had gone for a walk with the British Consul; and it was to be feared that he was quoting Homer. By lunch-time they were all quoting hard; Mr. Morley quoted Aristotle, and his leader quoted the Bible. Before the visit was out, they had quoted Goethe, Manzoni, Milton and Dr. Döllinger; they read Max Müller, and argued about the payment of Members. There was something inexpressibly odd about this bevy of English Liberals transported to the Bay of Biscay.

## BIARRITZ

They sat in full view of the Pyrenees and talked about Sir Robert Peel. They went to Bayonne in trams and talked about Lord Spencer. They went to Fuenterrabia by train and talked (perhaps it was a tribute to the influence of the rococo church) of Mr. Disraeli. There were no limits to their erudition. They quoted Scaliger; they compared Virgil with Lucretius; and "Persius was spoken of highly." One is left wondering how many of our present masters could speak of Persius highly. Yet there was Mr. Gladstone, in the intervals of backgammon with Mr. Armitstead, defending the Second Aeneid against the critical onslaughts of his Chief Secretary. They may not have solved the Irish Question in 1892: but at least they could read and write.

Something between a force of nature and a Minor Prophet, the last but two of Queen

## STILL LIFE

Victoria's Prime Ministers went for little walks in those astonishing capes with which Mrs. Gladstone tested the faith of nervous Liberals, or kept his room on the occasion of that disastrous "surfeit of wild strawberries" (for even Minor Prophets have their limitations at eighty-two), when he was just strong enough to receive Mr. Morley in a dressing-gown and discuss Burke and Marie Antoinette. The big hills stared solemnly across the Bay; and anxious Englishmen in bowler-hats argued about Irish finance. Once (happy day) they saw some fellow-countrymen in pink coats hunting foxes near St. Jean de Luz. And one day they drafted answers to the most important of Mr. G.'s birthday telegrams; there was one—very gracious—from the Prince and Princess of Wales, and such a nice one from the assistants at Marshall and Snelgrove's. So the bright

## BIARRITZ

winter days went on, as though the Rue Mazagran were Downing Street. They had brought an authentic air of Hawarden with them. Their thoughts were mainly of Homer and Mr. Parnell; their relaxations (in the absence of trees to fell) were strictly literary; and one feels that it was only by the exercise of strong repression that there were no little speeches on the platform, as their train went through Bordeaux and Dax. But it was all a great success; and Mrs. Gladstone got some silver for her birthday, and Mr. Armitstead died a Peer.



## KING'S BENCH WALK

THERE is a strange slope in London which lies between Fleet-street, where reputations mostly begin, and the river, where they so frequently end. Sheltered from the importunate incursions of clients and their cabmen by an unrivalled complication of alleys, and concealing beneath an exterior of mild domesticity the civic grandeur of its national function, it contains at least two creditable specimens of public architecture, a number of highly voracious pigeons, and the high-priests of the oldest and most mysterious of contemporary cults. The Temple, so admirably named, from its dual connotation of mystery and sacrifice, is the central shrine of British law. An imitation Gothic fortress



## STILL LIFE

across the road contains its official residence. There are branch establishments in simpler styles in the back streets of every town in the kingdom. But the true temple of the law, the Mecca of our jurisprudence towards which every practising solicitor inclines himself (first removing his pince-nez) at the hour of the polishing of the brass plate, is to be found, by that odd combination of accident and tradition which is the parent of British institutions, in

“ The little lanes, the little courts,  
The little church without a steeple,”

which, as the nameless poet observed,

“ Are all the favourite resorts  
Of most extraordinary people.”

One may add, at whatever risk of judicial displeasure, that their peculiarity runs in most cases a uniform course. Those stern-

## KING'S BENCH WALK

eyed men who flit about the Temple with mouths drawn down slightly at the corners are vowed to a high calling. The Middle Ages would have termed it a mystery ; and since they set an equal value upon mediæval atmosphere and the restriction of lay competition, they have done their very best to make a mystery of it. For the pellucid principles of the English law are intoned by its devotees in a jargon which acolytes can only repeat by rote and even adepts can barely understand. The “ simple little rules and few ” laid down by His Majesty for the guidance of suitors desiring access to his Courts are annually printed in volumes whose specific gravity and cubic content astonish those who, as in Dublin recently, seek impulsively to shoot a rifle-bullet through the thin-paper edition.

At infrequent intervals some portion of

## STILL LIFE

the law is codified, as a concession to vulgar clamour. This process, which commands the unvarying approval of the profession, involves the restatement of legal rules and principles in a measure which normally exceeds in length an intelligent judgment dealing with the same subject, while remaining infinitely inferior both in lucidity and arrangement. But it abounds, to the quiet satisfaction of a deserving and ingenious class, in the most exciting possibilities of misinterpretation. This mass of exquisite misunderstandings is termed "case-law," and is believed by British practitioners to be the Ark of English jurisprudence and the envy of foreign lawyers, whose frequent flattery is rarely expressed in the sincerer terms of imitation. Helped out by the legislative by-products of a distracted Parliament, it constitutes the law of England, and is administered daily in

## KING'S BENCH WALK

small doses by harassed gentlemen in large, brownish rooms, where the indifference of the ventilation is only rivalled by the inferiority of the acoustics. Its simple principles (for they are simple) are laboriously concealed from prying laity by the careful adoption of an impenetrable terminology. At its best lawyers' English is a convenient shorthand for the summary statement of complicated matters. But at its worst (and the worst is more often uppermost in human matters) it is a pompous and deliberate mystification, a more impressive variant of the *Ol: menth: pip:* with which the physician bewilders his patients (and not infrequently the chemist). That terminology constitutes the mystery of the lawyers' craft; and it is the long effort to make and keep a mystery of it that hardens those steely eyes, draws down the corners of those mouths,

## STILL LIFE

and weighs heavily on those preoccupied feet that pace so gravely, towards lunch-time, across the sunshine in the Temple.

The mystery is expounded in the hearing (though happily beyond the comprehension) of the people by the ranked hierarchy of the British judicature. The same ritual murmur runs from the Lord Chancellor on his Woolsack to the most inattentive local Justice of the Peace that ever uttered an inaccurate version of what he thought he heard his Clerk whisper to him. A hierophant sometimes steps outside the shrine and, at some risk of excommunication, seeks to describe the sanctified confusion, the darkness, the interesting aisles inside. Such attempts may seem to run counter to the whole tendency of the Trade Union spirit of the law, of that Guild-separatism which sets Mr. G. D. H. Cole's head nodding in time to Lord Halsbury's,

## KING'S BENCH WALK

and finds Lord Birkenhead speaking the same language as Mr. Clynes.

A heroic expositor once set out to make the attempt, to profane the mysteries of the *Bona Dea*, to rend, so to say, the veil of the Temple, and to render the system comprehensible, as he bravely said, to "the sixth form boy, the undergraduate, the new J.P." Life holds no mysteries for the undergraduate. But the schoolboy, even Macaulay's schoolboy, who knew so much—perhaps even Miss Rose Macaulay's, who knows still more—may be pardoned a momentary flicker of bewilderment as his learned friend twitches aside the curtain from the solemn edifice of British judicature.

It was a brave attempt to map a wood whose trees are more usually studied one at a time. Once in a century or so a lawyer is discovered who can write English. In the

## STILL LIFE

first shock of the discovery he is apt to desert the Temple and to write *Bab Ballads* or *Dolly Dialogues*. But if he can be persuaded to write law, the result is a sudden flash of light on the dark summits of our legal system, a rift in the smoking mist that clings round the climber, and a glimpse of the great orderly country of the law laid out below, before the clouds close in again. “Every man,” someone annually exclaims in an unprofessional outburst, “every man his own lawyer.” But the time is not yet ; and perhaps it is not such a bad thing either.

## THE UNION

It is the pleasing habit of ancient universities to disconcert modern critics by a graceful but obstinate refusal to strike didactic attitudes. They seem to have gone up into the most exquisitely carved pulpits in the world and, once there, with the sounding-board nicely adjusted and the congregation hushed in expectation, they refuse blandly to preach a sermon. Their tone, their charming human products, their engaging angle of view, and their characteristic architecture must all impress the really serious observer as lamentably (or is it laudably ?) devoid of any avowed educational purpose.

That is perhaps why those strong, persevering men who take Oxford and (let us be



## STILL LIFE

broad-minded) Cambridge in their stride between the King Edward VII University of Bursley and Kermit College, Packwaukee, Wisc., are not infrequently perplexed and irritated into a rash of Royal Commissions and leading articles and pamphlets ("End Them or Mend Them : A Word on University Reform"). It may be hard sometimes to detect the Message of Ashmole, and it is not always easy to catch just what Sheldon Has to Say to Us. But one would be unwise to conclude from the amiable inadvertence of Oxford that she is up to nothing at all. Any theologian will tell you that it is unsound to argue from the inconspicuousness of the curriculum to the conclusion that the curriculum is non-existent.

But, to say truth, the curriculum is, from the educational point of view, the least significant thing in Oxford. You may teach men

## THE UNION

to follow the movements of the stars or the gyrations of the enclitics. You may impart commercial geography or book-keeping by double entry. But so long as you leave Oxford unimpaired as a temple of the spoken word, you will be doing no harm to its most sacred function. It is, whatever standards they may set up in the Examination Schools or ~~on~~ the river, an academy of speech where a man may incessantly for four years of his life, go out to talk, and talk, and return from talking. He may favour midnight conversation, talking in punts, or the *causeries* of North Oxford (the conversational equivalent of mixed hockey). But to whichever variety of talk he may incline, he will find, when he finally turns his cab towards that station which whispered to Miss Zuleika Dobson the last enchantments of the Middle Age, that talk, which is the one thing which

## STILL LIFE

Oxford makes no organized attempt to teach, is also the one thing that in Oxford he has thoroughly learnt.

If Oxford is, as one has said, a temple of the spoken word, it contains within itself the Holy of Holies of speech. It lies up an alley from a singularly cheerful and uninspired street, and for six days it masquerades, as a normally conducted club. But ~~once~~ in the week, when the sacred lamp is lit, the Union appears in its true character as the innermost school and shrine and altar of articulate speech. It is there that a man may learn and teach himself almost the most precious of Oxford's gifts. That is why the gentle, perfect Oxford man should be most completely the Man who was Thursday.

The Union, which has always been singularly unembarrassed by its high tradition, is an artless educator. It may teach a man

## THE UNION

anything from the art of condensation and the science (so invaluable to all Front Benchers) of leaning gracefully on a despatch-box to the less essential but equally decorative accomplishment of debating deportment, to that profusion of "It will have been your experience, Sir," and "It is for the House to assign the responsibility" and "The Right Honourable, learned, noble and gallant ex-President from Wadhām," which is the modern controversialist's equivalent for the sweeping bow and pointed toe of well-conducted duellists. It is, for so many of us, the heart and centre of Oxford. *Floreat : florebit.*



## MONS—GALLIPOLI

THERE is a certain state of mind, unless perhaps it is a state of health, which prefers its hopes forlorn. It can only breathe in the tense air of disaster; and failure has quite a success with it. Any student of opinion will tell you that, with a British posterity, one sound, romantic defeat will go twice as far as three vulgar victories; and nothing in London is more significant than the fact that Gordon, who failed, is in Trafalgar Square, whilst Napier, who succeeded, has penetrated no further than Waterloo Place. Contemporaries may be incommoded by the loss of a war; but posterity, if the historians know their business, is a glutton for failure.

## STILL LIFE

This temper, which is as early as the *Chanson de Roland* and as late as the latest book on the Dardanelles, is not entirely peculiar to these islands ; but it is on British territory that it has found its fullest expression. Deriving small satisfaction from the monotonies of military success, and taking little pleasure in the brass and cymbals of triumphant marches, it turns a sensitive ear to catch the wailing minor and the muffled drums as the Lost Legion goes by. It feeds, like some sick bee, upon the shrunken laurels of defeat ; and if it has a favourite General, he is probably Sir John Moore. Lord Nelson and, in a smaller degree, Lord Kitchener, humoured it, when they atoned for a career of victory with a death so ill-timed that it was almost as good as a defeat ; and even Mr. Kipling, who is at other times a most regular attendant at divine worship on the side of

## MONS—GALLIPOLI

the big battalions, paid an unusual tribute to the British taste for reverses when he dwelt lovingly on the panic of the "Fore and Aft," known to a less chauvinistic *Army List* of the early Nineties as "The Fore and Fit, Princess Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen-Auspach's Merthyr-Tydfilshire Own Royal Loyal Light Infantry."

The mood is a queer one, with its sentimental hankering after frustrated effort. It loves the bridges to go down behind an anxious army; it rejoices as the Matabele come in with the assegai between the white-topped waggons of the *laager*; and it is never so happy as when a British square is broken in the desert south of Korti and the Baggara sweep in, slashing and stabbing round the jammed Gatling. Its taste is all for the half-lights and the subdued tones of unsuccess; and it is, so far as it relates to



## STILL LIFE

military failure, a peculiarly British taste. One cannot remember any Roman writer who felt the wistful charm of Carrhae; Jena Day was never widely celebrated in Prussia; and one has not heard that an unduly prominent place is occupied by the Armada in the curriculum of the Spanish primary schools. But an island people is agreeably inclined to apply to land warfare romantic canons by which it would never dream of measuring failure in the more serious fields of commerce or war by sea. There is no spot-light of romance centred on heroic bankrupts or unsuccessful admirals. It is only on land that the English display this engaging temper of retrospective defeatism.

Four years of war have inevitably provided this mood with some highly promising raw material. There is a queer tendency in the

## MONS—GALLIPOLI

purveyors of our war literature to prefer the stormy romance of Mons and the sunlit tragedy of Gallipoli to the simpler, more direct appeal of victory in Palestine and Mesopotamia or the decisive triumphs of the French summer of 1918. The historical instinct is a sound one, when it focuses the attention of posterity upon the opening moves in the great game; and there is, besides the sentimental appeal of it, a real importance in the growing literature of Mons and the Marne. The history of Europe for a generation to come, and perhaps the life of mankind in the whole future which remains to it; was profoundly modified by the events of that hot harvest-time of 1914, when the fine flower of German military education drew a bow at anything but a venture, and missed. It is true that it took the Allies four years to win the war which the Germans

## STILL LIFE

had lost in 1914; but the history of any month of those four years which followed is of less significance than the story of any half-hour in the six weeks which had gone before.

General Lanrezac's story is in many ways the most illuminating. One begins in it at the very beginning, when the wires were still humming between the European capitals with solutions of the Servian *impasse*. A roomful of Generals sat round a table in the Rue St. Dominique, and an imperturbable old gentleman with a heavy moustache smiled indomitably (and even a trifle irritatingly) at his anxious questioners. One General came away from the conference asking fretfully whether Joffre "had an idea"; and one is left with an uneasy feeling that if he had, it was the idea of Wilkins Micawber. It is desolating to realize that upon these frivolous old gentlemen, with

## MONS—GALLIPOLI

their false mystery and their half-developed "science" of war, rested the continued existence of European democracy. No spectacle of equal inadequacy was presented to mankind until the meeting of the Peace Conference nearly five years later, when the pigmies went mud-larking round the foundations of the New Jerusalem.

After this vivid glimpse of an August afternoon in Paris, the story deepens; and one has the torturing spectacle of French Headquarters straining their eyes eastwards for the dust of the German advance, whilst the fevered Lanrezac on the Belgian frontier insisted in tones of increasing asperity that the danger lay in the North. At this point the Germans take up the tale; and General von Kluck takes station on the right of the German line to sweep across Belgium, swing half-left and then, shepherding an unwilling

## STILL LIFE

flock before him, to drive down from the frontier into the heart of France. He struck and failed ; and the story of that failure is told by him in the level tones of an official memorandum, drafted in 1915 and revised three years later, at a time when there was still a German Empire and a legend of Teutonic invincibility, but a deposed Army commander might strike a more impressive attitude in the theatre of posterity by transferring a little blame to Great Headquarters.

It is the function of the technical military historian to undramatize the most dramatic events in history ; he could probably reduce *King Lear* to an appreciation of the general situation on the Heath, operation orders of the French army, and a despatch from the Earl of Kent to the Secretary of State for War. General von Kluck has purged his drama of all its pity and all its terror with

## MONS—GALLIPOLI

more than Aristotelian thoroughness ; and one would hardly guess, without looking at the place names, that the even voice with its Staff College pedantry was telling the tale of that incredible August when men fought all day and marched all night and remade a world in the white dust of the French roads. It all reads so like the report of an Army Inspector on the autumn manoeuvres of 1912, that one waits automatically for the crashing charge of massed cavalry with which a courtly Staff generally titillated the military imagination of Imperial Majesty ; and one starts at the sudden discovery of a real enemy killing and being killed, and a *finale* on the Marne which owed nothing to German stage-management.

The story of Mons found a happy ending on the Marne. But Gallipoli marches towards its catastrophe like the *Agamemnon*.

## STILL LIFE

In the first act light-hearted warships slide up and down a blue sea, tossing shell into nineteenth-century forts. Follows a pause, in which an amiable gentleman took orders in a room in Whitehall ; and then a party of Generals found themselves installed in a cruiser to watch the Navy batter its head against the Narrows and draw off, with the little ships huddled round the mined, lop-sided battleships. Then came an interlude to martial music in Egypt, when Sir Ian, thoroughly attuned to the historical significance of his command, took the salute at a review in the sand outside Alexandria and went home to write in his diary : “ High, high soared our hopes. Jerusalem—Constantinople ? ” But the answer to his eager question was—Gallipoli.

His diary is, on the whole, the best document that has come out of the war. When

## MONS—GALLIPOLI

he followed the Japanese in Manchuria as a mere Military Attaché, he managed to convey more of the meaning of war in *A Staff Officer's Scrap Book* than any writer on it since Tolstoi; and when the commander of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force\* turns its historian, he writes not only the best book on the war but, in one judgment, the best book on war. His *Odyssey* (for, like Odysseus, Sir Ian Hamilton was born in the Ionian Islands) is a brilliant achievement. He has a keen eye for detail and a vivid historical imagination; and his grasp of the general contours of the wood does not disable him from pointing out the amusing shape of many of the trees. Indeed it is the vivid drawing of his details which helps burn the whole picture into one's memory. Lord Kitchener at his desk "with flashing spectacles"; the conning-tower of the *Queen*



## STILL LIFE

*Elizabeth* during the landing on the Peninsula; those awful boats off Ocean Beach ("Several boats are stranded along this no man's land; so far all attempts to get out at night and bury the dead have only led to fresh losses. No one ever landed out of these boats, so they say"); and the night sounds at sea ("Half an hour the bombardment and counter-bombardment, and then there arose the deadly 'crepitation' of small-arms—no messages—ten times I went back and forward to the signal-room—no messages—until a new and dreadful sound was carried on the night wind out to sea—the sound of the shock of whole regiments—the Turkish Allah Din!—our answering loud Hurrahs")—such pictures as these are raw, living history written down by a man who helped to make it. The literary accomplishment of them may scandalize the illiterate taciturnity

## MONS—GALLIPOLI

of some of our conquerors. But Gallipoli was not lost because Sir Ian could write English : one should never forget that Napoleon, who was as successful as most Sandhurst soldiers, talked incessantly from birth and produced thirty-two volumes of correspondence.

The history of the affair appears pitiably clear from Sir Ian's journal. First, the soldiers were put in to watch the sailors win. Then submarines thrust their grey snouts into the blue waters of the Levant, and the sailors, their skirts tucked tightly round their ankles, stood by to watch the soldiers win. They did not win in the first chapter, because Sir John French was going to end the war at Loos and required for that purpose the entire resources of the British Empire. They did not win in the second chapter, because Mr. Lloyd George had discovered,

## STILL LIFE

by the aid of a small-scale map, that the war was to be won in the suburbs of Salonika, and the Government diverted to the aid of Serbia the men who might have marched into Constantinople. It is a queer story that Sir Ian tells, between his official correspondence and his etchings of war. In his gracious retrospect Gallipoli, for all the horror of its failure and its unburied dead, is touched with an odd quality that is almost charm, drawn from a thousand friendships and ten thousand sacrifices. "How sad and mad and bad it was—But then, how it was sweet!"

## TWO PRINCES

HISTORICAL parallels, even since Einstein, rarely meet. Our masters are frequently tempted to displays of impressive information by the faint similarity of widely separated events, and the common result is a distortion of two sets of facts and the substitution of a common denominator of falsehood in the mind of a bewildered public. The career of Napoleon I was twisted almost beyond recognition to provide historical analogies for Napoleon III; and innumerable statesmen have been misrepresented in order to enable a journalist to observe, in that knowing way of his, that they went to Canossa. But one may, without being Procrustean, detect a resemblance between the two pallid boys who faded out

## STILL LIFE

of history when the French beheaded their King in a great square and the Russians shot their Emperor in a little room. There is the same sad flavour of predestined futility about the Dauphin and the Tsarevitch—the same lingering tenderness of the world in their early youth, succeeded by the same harsh questions of democracy when they were old enough for martyrdom, and even the same faint, haunting doubts of history as to how and when they ended.

Historians, although their style would not lead one to think so, are almost human. Those thin lips, which pay to the fall of dynasties the grudging tribute of a platitude, are sometimes twisted into a smile. Those pillars of public rectitude have little private lapses; and that cold eye, which observes in the grinding passage of centuries little more than the material for an instructive

## TWO PRINCES

sketch-map, lights up at home when there are sausages for tea. But there is one point at which their human weakness is permitted to stray into the frozen wilderness of their work. The most solemn historian goes down like a school-girl before a mystery. His bare study is littered with clues, and he will follow a false scent with all the activity of the meanest of God's office-boys that ever bought an evening paper for an unconfirmed confession of an undetected crime. They stare in fascination at the Man in the Iron Mask. They fill monographs with conjectural ingenuity about the *Letters of Junius*. They toy archly with exalted scandal about the Archduke Rudolph and the shots in the dark at Meyerling. But they assume their most mysterious air when a winter sun drops behind the great tower of the Temple in 1793 and a pale boy is half seen at a window.

## STILL LIFE

There is something queer about the story. When the drums rolled in the Place de la Révolution and the drop of a sloping knife made a widow of Marie Antoinette, the boy in prison became King of France. For twelve months of his reign he was seen about the Temple. His games, his birds, his lessons, that dreadful day when he made against his mother the charges which they had taught him are all recorded. But after a day in 1794 the story is muted. No one seems to see him ; there is a queer silence in the Temple ; the princesses in the room above catch hardly a sound from the prison. Someone was there—a patient, rather stupid child who fell ill and eventually died. When he was dead, the doctors did queer things which made him almost unrecognizable. That is the story from which half a hundred pretenders have started, each claiming to be

## TWO PRINCES

the Dauphin ; and when one reads it, one can hardly doubt that one of them was right.

If there is a mystery, there is only one man to solve it. The method of M. Lenôtre has been applied to countless problems of the Revolution. It is the patient, tedious, fascinating method of the police. He will leave nothing to his own imagination, and in the result his careful accumulation of detail fires his reader's. One would give all the rhapsodies of all the sentimental historians for one page of M. Lenôtre, with his vivid evocation of the scene. Other men make perorations over Marie Antoinette ; he gives one the inventory of her prison furniture, and one may finger the damask on her chairs by spending a few moments in one of his footnotes. It is a method of infinite patience, and it is the ideal manner for a student of mysteries. A man may paint the story of



## STILL LIFE

Louis XVI in broad, bright strokes. But one cannot follow his son into the half-darkness without a more careful guide.

The key, if there is one, lies somewhere in the politics of 1794, when the bright light of the Revolution was beginning to waver and men were looking round them for a way of escape. There was a young King of France in prison; and if some group could only put him forward, it might end the Revolution and govern in his name. Hébert and Danton had the notion. Perhaps they carried it out and took the boy away. But they died too soon. Then Robespierre had the notion: he came to the Temple, and the boy was sent to Meudon. But they brought him back to Paris; perhaps he was not the King after all. Robespierre died on a summer evening, and after him Barras removed the boy from prison, and left another in his

## TWO PRINCES

place. The boy in prison died and they buried him. But somewhere in France the boy who had left prison in 1794 was still living.

He might return. He did, when the Revolution had died down, return in large numbers. One of him was an elegant creature who was widely believed in, and even enlisted the credulity of a Bishop. But there was a duller, heavier man who came from New Orleans in 1815. They stared at him when he landed at St. Malo, and he spoke in a yokel way. He was a baker—*le petit mitron* of the old songs of 1795—and King Louis XVIII exhibited only the faintest enthusiasm for the discovery of his predecessor. Perhaps he was the King. He was stupid enough.



## A GRAND DUCHESS

WASHED (in the pleasing metaphor of geographers) by no less than two rivers, and supported, as one had always believed, by the subsidies of a wealthy firm of stamp dealers and the publishers of the *Almanach de Gotha*, the city of Luxemburg maintains with becoming modesty the establishments of a Grand Duchy and an army of three hundred men. In its streets, which are undulating and not without dignity, one feels curiously free from the oppressive air exhaled by great Governments. An exuberant person who succumbs in Piccadilly to his sense of exhilaration has the disquieting certainty that his conduct will be instantly resented by forty-five million persons, and that their

## STILL LIFE

objections will be promptly crystallized in a massive and familiar form. But the happy traveller who is impelled by his holiday sense to take into his confidence (*falsetto*) the Grand' Rue at Luxemburg must be cheerfully aware that it is at most a family offence somewhat akin to whistling in the drawing-room, and that even if a policeman comes, he will only be a small policeman.

Its engaging littleness exercises a charm familiar to all classes of collectors, and it is in the temper which drives men to the study of Japanese ivories or of the precise quantities of devotional literature that can be conveniently inscribed on small silver coins that many travellers have alighted expectantly at the Grand Ducal capital. Indeed, if they are seriously in search of the sensation which Luxemburg can give them, they generally take it on the way from Andorra to San

## A GRAND DUCHESS

Marino, between which States it is conveniently situated. It has a little capital, a little monarchy, a little national anthem (doubtless sung *diminuendo* in a setting for still, small voices), and—for little people are always the most modish—some little revolutions.

An accomplished lady once appeared in the character of its little Gibbon and introduced her small charge to the reader in the latest of its exploits, when Luxemburg played a child's part in the huge tragedy of 1914. One could hardly praise an historical arrangement which appeared to take a trifle too literally the injunction that the last shall be first, and one might well have waited for an epilogue to hear about the German invasion. Indeed, it might have been better for some of us if she had compelled us to do so, because the current impression that

## STILL LIFE

history began towards the end of July, 1914, is a popular error that is still waiting for its Sir Thomas Browne : Germany is suffering to-day for a similar misbelief that the world was created in the hot weather of 1870.

But apart from this error in arrangement the story was full of interest. The German proclamation with which the Coblenz command justified the invasion is mildly entertaining : ‘ “ Since France, disregarding Luxemburg’s neutrality, has opened hostilities from the Luxemburg side against German troops, His Majesty, under the bitter force of iron necessity, has commanded that German troops in the first line of the 8th Army Corps should enter Luxemburg.” His Majesty was admirably responsive to the stimulus; and the result was an invasion which, so far as the Luxemburgers were concerned, was rather mild-mannered, but was none

## A GRAND DUCHESS

the less a violation of international decency resulting in the control of the Grand Duchy by foreigners for a period of four years, at the end of which the Grand Duchess stood with General Pershing on her balcony to watch (as her loyal hotel-proprietors had so often watched before) the Americans go by. They went, with a dry humour that is not unusual in the American temperament, in the direction of Coblenz: perhaps they too were reacting to the bitter force of iron necessity.

The historian of Luxemburg appears to present the history of Europe in miniature: she is for ever holding up the wrong end of the telescope to history. There is a tiny working model of the Great War seen from the angle of the Duchy; there are faint noises, like a stage crowd on a gramophone, that are believed to represent the distant



## STILL LIFE

reverberations of the French Revolution; and there is a diminutive version of the trumpets and trophies of the First Empire. The historian seems to tilt her little Grand Duchy to one's ear like a tiny sea-shell in which one may catch faintly the echo of the European surges.

When Belgium flared up in its queer, reactionary revolution against the dangerously reforming tendencies of the House of Hapsburg (it is a sin for which subsequent occupants of that throne have made ample atonement), Luxemburg strained its manpower to the utmost by raising two thousand men for Joseph II. Four years later an outlying army of the French Republic threw the Austrians out of the last corner of the Ardennes, and Luxemburg entered the orbit of the Revolution. The little province was dragged unresisting in the wake of the

## A GRAND DUCHESS

First Empire ; with the rest of Europe it lay passive on the green operating table at Vienna in 1815 ; and not until late in the last century did it rise to the dignity of possessing a problem of its own. The question of Luxemburg, with which Napoleon III mystified the clubmen of 1867, was caused by a half-hearted attempt to retrieve by a success of some kind the losses which France appeared to have suffered by the gains of Prussia in 1866. For a few weeks there was a scurry of excitement. Prussian engineers worked by the light of flares on Vauban's fortifications, and anxious diplomats looked up Luxemburg on the map. But the storm died down, and the little Duchy faded back once more into the mild felicity of Gerolstein.



## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

WHISPERING from its towers the last enchantment of the middle-class, the Foreign Office occupies an eligible central situation between Whitehall and St. James's Park. The grateful taxpayer provides it with an abundance of admirable stationery, and it is perhaps the last place in London where everybody is a gentleman. Possibly that is why it is deficient in repartee and finds its strength, like the well-bred heroes of Mr. Seton Merri-man, in silence. It is, like that other cause of revolutions, the States-General of 1789, an interesting but neglected antiquity, hovering uncertainly between an uncomfortable club for elderly bachelors and an academy for the sons of gentlemen (for at least one

## STILL LIFE

grandfather is the legal minimum). Behind the solid joinery of its doors, and above the royal ciphers upon its hearth-rugs, the public acts of the United Kingdom lie in the hands of fifty persons and at the mercy of about five.

The Foreign Office, as Lord Avebury must have said of Stonehenge, is a remarkable place. For the average Englishman it occupies a position a little higher than the Post Office, a little lower than the Bank. But among all the public institutions of Great Britain it has impressed the Continent. It has impressed it almost as profoundly as the Lord-Mayoralty and the sale of wives at Smithfield. An historian of the Second Empire, whose election to the French Academy did not depend solely upon his philology, has referred with reverence to the subtlety of the *Forig Office de Londres*; and his

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

respect is typical of its European reputation. The causes of this sentiment are among the most mysterious things in Europe. It may be the quality of its notepaper (which is excellent), since it can hardly be the continuity of its policy, which is not continuous.

Through the whole course of history Great Britain has consistently confounded her enemies by the inconsistency of her acts. Latin logic and Teutonic deduction have exhausted the exactitude of all the systems in the effort to forecast the proceedings of British statesmen. But there is no calculation known to man that can discover the next move of England, since it is never known to England itself. To this is due the Puck-like quality of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State. That is the essence of British policy ; it has no golden rule except that it has no golden rule. It proceeds in

## STILL LIFE

no single ascertained direction for ten years at a time ; that is where it gets the better of Russian policy, which laboriously executed through the Nineteenth Century the codicils of the will of Peter the Great. It seeks no natural frontiers, because geography is not taught in the Public Schools ; that is where it has the advantage over France, which is perpetually returning, as any schoolboy can see, to the line of the Rhine. It has no natural enmities comparable to the rivalry of Slav and Teuton, because the European Powers have been indifferently its allies and its adversaries. In the result British policy has remained the incalculable factor which does the sum, whilst the movement of Russia towards the Dardanelles, of France towards the Rhine, or of Germany towards the lower Scheldt was patent to anyone who could read a line of history or a square inch of a map.

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

It is a great inheritance. For three centuries Great Britain has maintained the stupendous opportunism of the Balance of Power, facing the European storm with a variation of direction and an accuracy of judgment which were both borrowed from the weather-cock. As a national symbol that prescient and revolving fowl may lack inspiration, but it represents fairly enough the starry ideal to which British statesmanship has hitched the wagon of British policy. "It is a narrow policy to suppose that this country or that is to be marked out as the eternal ally or the perpetual enemy of England. We have no eternal allies, and we have no perpetual enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual, and those interests it is our duty to follow." The statement is no less reliable because it was made by Lord Palmerston following a considered judgment



## STILL LIFE

of Mr. Canning. Knowing French (an accomplishment normally confined to permanent officials), the noble lord might have said of his country's policy: *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

One fascinating result of this constant variation of direction is a delightful inconsistency between its various exponents. Right honourable gentlemen stretch quivering forefingers across the despatch box towards the wrath to come, and locate it alternately in North and South and East. Spain, Holland, France, Russia and Germany have successively troubled the sleep of British Ministers, and it is remarkable that Austria is the one country in Europe that has never provided England with a menace. In these circumstances, it was delightfully malicious of a friend of Mr. Lloyd George to compile an anthology of speeches on British policy.

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

These Little Flowers of the Foreign Office are so engagingly divergent ; it is a garden which grows, after a celebrated model, quite contrary. Any collection of speeches which is largely Parliamentary is consequently disfigured with the wealth of unnecessary parenthesis which forms the House of Commons manner. One can never forget that Robinson in his embarrassed transit through English politics embellished one Budget speech with a series of six visions and a quotation from Shakespeare and ended another with a sentence standing twenty-seven lines long in Hansard. Even Foreign Secretaries are more reasonable when they get to the country, and the finest speeches in the collection are those delivered to popular audiences. It is a most useful and instructive garner ; it might perhaps be called the Brazen Treasury.

## STILL LIFE

It is hardly kind to the memory of Chatham to include a speech on the Spanish question delivered in Opposition ; any man was justified in talking nonsense to get Walpole out of office. But his second speech, which derives a false appearance of relevance from its title, "The Defence of Weaker States," contains an interesting, if unconscious, prophecy :

"With respect to Corsica I shall only say that France has obtained a more useful and important acquisition in one pacific campaign than in any of her belligerent campaigns."

The noble Earl was speaking in the year 1770. Six months earlier by the act of policy to which he referred a child of uncertain temper called Napoleon came into the world as a French subject : it was a French ac-

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

quisition of which the precise extent was to be more fully appreciated by Chatham's son. The wise compiler would include comparatively few of the innumerable speeches inspired by the really Great War; there should be the admirable onslaughts of Sheridan upon the traditional system of fighting British battles with the hire-purchase armies of Hesse-Cassel, "the *posse comitatus*, the rabble of Germany"; and there will no doubt come an interminable speech by William Pitt on the unreliable diplomacy of the Consulate, closing with the celebrated "*Cur igitur pacem nolo? Quia infida est, quia periculosa, quia esse non potest*," an apostrophe which would leave the present House of Commons under the impression that peace had been concluded upon terms which it was inadvisable at the present moment to divulge.

## STILL LIFE

There is no clearer statement of England's claim to act as the Special Constable of Europe than Palmerston's impeachment speech of 1848 :

“ I hold that the real policy of England—apart from ‘ questions which involve her own particular interests, political or commercial—is to be the champion of justice and right ; pursuing that course with moderation and prudence, not becoming the Quixote of the world, but giving the weight of her moral sanction and support wherever she thinks that justice is, and wherever she thinks that wrong has been done.”

It is surprising that no contemporary seems to have noticed the quaint humour of this statement of policy by a country without an army.

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

Perhaps the most instructive pieces in such a collection are the speeches delivered by Earl Russell and Mr. Disraeli in 1864 upon the Austro-Prussian invasion of Denmark. The Treaty of London had undoubtedly placed Great Britain under certain obligations with regard to Danish integrity. The Prussians had occupied Schleswig-Holstein and driven the Danes behind the lines of Düppel. But “my Lords, our honour not being engaged, we have to consider what we might be led to do for the interests of other Powers, and for the sake of that balance of power which in 1852 was declared by general consent to be connected with the integrity of Denmark. . . . In the first place, it is the duty of this country—if we are to undertake the preservation of the balance of power in Europe as it was recognized in 1852—is it a duty incumbent on us alone?” This argument

## STILL LIFE

was supplemented a week later by Mr. Disraeli, when he informed another place that “under that Treaty England incurred no legal responsibility which was not equally entered into by France and by Russia.” These speeches are a mine of unheroic but ingenious argument, with which Ministers of the Crown might have defended the non-intervention of England in the war for Belgium. They were explained two years later, when Lord Stanley expounded after Sadowa “the feeling that we ought not to be dragged into these Continental wars,” and added that “if North Germany is to become a single Great Power, I do not see that any English interest is in the least degree affected”; it must be remembered that the noble Lord was at that date sleepless with the fear of French *chassepots* and the military efficiency of the Second Empire.

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

But the brightest jewel in the Downing Street coronal is the speech in which the Earl of Beaconsfield laid the Treaty of Berlin upon the table of the House of Lords. Disraeli at his worst was a political Perlmutter, and his ready-made formulæ never fitted his country worse. If his novels were always the novels of a politician, his politics were never more obviously the politics of a novelist. For an accident of youth had taken the noble Earl upon a pleasure cruise in the Levant, and it resulted that forty years later his country was pledged to the sacred cause of Turkey. The Sikhs came to Malta, the Fleet went to Besika Bay, and Mr. Macdermott was understood to observe that the Russians Should Not Have Constantinople. The Prime Minister agreed with him, and went to Berlin to say so : the result was that miracle of diplomatic ingenuity which Europe



## STILL LIFE

has been occupied in destroying for the last eight years.

“ My Lords, it has been said that no limit has been fixed to the occupation of Bosnia by Austria! Well, I think that was a very wise step.”

There you have the elements of the annexation crisis of 1908 and the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914.

“ It is not the first time that Austria has occupied provinces at the request of Europe to ensure that order and tranquillity, which are European interests, might prevail in them. Not once, twice, or thrice has Austria undertaken such an office.”

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

To the happy monuments of the Netherlands and North Italy Lord Beaconsfield gaily added Old Serbia : it is the problem before Europe to-day. With regard to Bulgaria he added with pride :

“ The new Principality, which was to exercise such an influence and produce a revolution in the disposition of the territory and policy of that part of the globe, is now merely a state in the Valley of the Danube, and both in its extent and population is reduced to one-third of what was contemplated by the Treaty of San Stefano.”

That is the direct cause of the Balkan War ; and when Turkey emerged shattered from that conflict, Germany entered on the phase of disillusioned desperation which brought it to the mad-dog policy of the summer of 1914. It was a little bitter of the antholo-

## STILL LIFE

gist to reprint that speech in that year. Of the speeches provoked by the last war (or is it the last but one?) Mr. Asquith's, in addition to his successful negotiation of Mr. George Morrow's shibboleth "we are unsheathing our sword," were at once the shortest and the best. Viscount Grey was almost offensively simple: one cannot satisfactorily transpose all politics and half history into words of one syllable, and the dialect of Mrs. Markham is unsuited to the broad treatment of European problems. Mr. Lloyd George was more characteristic. The enemy were reviled as though they had been Unionists; and in the last round that ear, always so near to the ground, detected the coming boom in pugilism, and its master became the spokesman of Western Europe on the strength of a metaphor from the prize-ring.

## SOME FOREIGN SECRETARIES

It would be cruel to ask the editor of such a collection for an index, which must contain such entries as “ Prussia, nobility of, p. 323 ; perfidy of, p. 537.” Which is the best of the Balance of Power.



## AN ARCHBISHOP

It is not often that a retiring Archbishop is shot against a wall. There are some clergymen who might welcome such an end as a legitimate form of publicity. But Georges Darboy hated notoriety, and his end was as unfitting as events in revolutions generally are. He had made a career in the French Church under the Second Empire ; but the Commune of Paris was not thinking particularly of the Empire when it imprisoned him at Mazas and shot him at La Roquette. Napoleon III was almost forgotten when the Commune came down from Montmartre upon the city, and Darboy was not shot as a punishment for his political past, but simply for the unhappy accident

## STILL LIFE

which had made of this provincial priest an Archbishop of Paris and a hostage of the Commune. The shooting of Jecker was by some reasoning a legitimate revenge; for that banker was thought to have lured the Empire into the questionable adventure of Mexico. But the execution of Darboy was entirely meaningless. Political "frightfulness" formed no part of the original programme of the Commune, and the martyrdom of an Archbishop could serve no cause but his own. He was destroyed by the Commune, which had no need of his destruction: it was as pointless as pigeon-shooting.

French Bishops are generally interesting, possibly because they live in an anti-clerical country. Like most French Churchmen, Darboy was a provincial; he was born in a village upon the plateau of Langres twelve

## AN ARCHBISHOP

months before the rulers of Central Europe made (and kept) their famous *rendezvous* on that height for the destruction of Napoleon; and he was a peaceful Abbé in the eastern provinces when the Emperor's nephew made his escape from the fortress of Ham and returned to London to take up his duties as a special constable. But by the time that Louis Napoleon had abandoned the constabulary for the Presidency of the Republic, Darboy was a popular preacher in Paris. His popularity even survived a fatuous observation with regard to Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, that "it is impossible to define what they mean on all occasions, or the force of the words in the mouth of some parties." Under the Second Republic Darboy became something of a pamphleteer. His Archbishop was shot in a Parisian *journée*; and when Sibour came from Digne to Paris,



## STILL LIFE

Darboy became his Vicar-General. Once again the Archbishop of Paris was the victim of violence, when Sibour was stabbed by a priest. Darboy became Bishop of Nancy and returned to the east of France. But for once an Archbishop of Paris died in his bed; and it was for Darboy, who succeeded him in 1863, to return to the tradition of violence.

The See of Paris under the later Empire was an instructive field for an intelligent Churchman. Religion in France received the official support of a national establishment, but it was confronted by the old anti-religious fervour of the Revolution and the new anti-clericalism of science working in an educated and increasingly industrial population; and the larger world of Catholicism outside France was convulsed by the policy of Pius IX, which did little

## AN ARCHBISHOP

to make life simpler for a Gallican Archbishop of Paris. His biographer strove gallantly to remind us by scraps of French that the scene was laid in France. He even observed, a shade unkindly, that Darboy "was always the *pièce de résistance* of a large circle." But when he speaks of a lady's "picadillos," he creates a grave doubt as to whether he means a small variety of bull-fighter or a central part of London.

With the year 1867 Darboy seems to have become something of a gloomy dean; his sense of the wrath to come exasperated some of his contemporaries, and it was a bitter justification of his foresight that when it came it involved himself. The Archbishop of Paris did not follow the Government in any of its migrations. In the siege of Paris he did not become Archbishop of Bordeaux,

## STILL LIFE

and in the Commune he did not retire to a suburban see at Versailles. It resulted that he became a hostage of the Communards, and when the Commune shot its hostages, it shot Darboy.

## A SOLICITOR

WE live (it is the delight of publishers) in the age of the confessional. • A simpler generation murmured its shortcomings through a grating into the ear of its spiritual director. But this elementary machinery proved grossly insufficient for the more complex needs of the modern world, and we have lately improved it out of all knowledge. With the assistance of the arts of stenography, printing, and advertisement, our contemporaries—or at least those of them ~~whose~~ whose voices can stand the strain—roar their peccadilloes to the four quarters of the sky. Their secret sorrows become public delights; it is the klaxon rather than the curfew tolls the knell of their parting day;

## STILL LIFE

and their souls are laid bare on all the railway-bookstalls, due provision being made in an American edition for the simpler appetites of a younger nation.

Now the trouble began, as it mostly does, on the Continent. A young lady of Russian extraction, in the enjoyment of poor health, became a posthumous best-seller. Within a few years the elegant attention of Mr. Max Beerbohm was drawn to "a seemingly inexhaustible supply of anguished souls from the Continent—infantile, wide-eyed Slavs, Titan Teutons, greatly blighted Scandinavians, all of them different, but all of them raving in one common darkness, and with one common gesture plucking out their vitals for exportation." Then the idea began to catch on in these islands, and one might almost have suspected that the national hero was Edward the Confessor, as a great

## A SOLICITOR

portion of English literature swiftly became a mere autopsy on eminent persons conducted by themselves. We were told in a dozen tones what it was like to be a successful novelist, an incurable invalid, or an invincible prize-fighter. We have been given a mild foretaste of the joys of posterity in discovering how it feels to be the *Times* Military Correspondent or to marry a Prime Minister. And here, at the end of the long, confessing line of great ladies and dapper gentlemen, comes the trim, professional figure of our solicitor with a bag full of secrets and a cold blue eye. Yielding to the common impulse, he too—like the ladies and the gentlemen and the geniuses—hurls himself at our knees and confesses all.

The solicitor, as one meets him in his moment of expansion, is a vastly different

## STILL LIFE

fellow from the calm figure which generally sits between us and the light on the far side of that large desk in Bedford Row or Ely Place. There, with clerks and telephones responsive to his call and all the hounds of Justice crouching in his leash, he is remote and omnipotent, like the Absolute, whilst one sits in an uncomfortable chair making vague gestures of propitiation towards him and endeavouring to impress him with the intolerable burden of our wrongs (if we are members of the public) or with the staggering brilliance of our abilities (if we are members of the Bar).

But he beams at us in his confessions with a far milder eye. One finds that his clerks paint in water-colour. We learn (it is a human touch) that he cannot get on with his partner. The tight lips relax into a human smile, the piercing gaze is clouded with pity

## A SOLICITOR

of the unhappy client ; and the stern votary of an apparently imbecile and implacable procedure reveals beneath his armour a sense of social service. One had never suspected in one's solicitor the mentality of the district visitor ; but there it is. No young man, he says, will be happy in the profession "without what Catholics call a sense of vocation—a desire to serve other human beings—or what has been defined as 'the religion of pity.'" One can imagine the incredulous snorts with which that claim will be received in those darkened homes of England where lawyers are regarded as the ~~unclean~~ instruments appointed by Providence for compassing the acquittal of guilty persons.

He ushers ladies into the profession with the somewhat chilling courtesy of his observation that "clearly both branches of the law



## STILL LIFE

offer as excellent an opening for the same type of celibate woman with exceptional talent as any other profession." One figures the anxious parent of the future holding in one hand Messrs. —'s letter as to the cost of making a young lady into an articulated clerk, whilst he gazes dubiously at his daughter in the hope of ascertaining whether she is likely to turn out to be a celibate of exceptional talent.

Our solicitor manifestly listens unconcerned to the swish of petticoats in Chancery Lane. "There can be no doubt," he admits thoughtfully, "that at least one per cent. of women are quite as intelligent as any man." One sees now why he preferred to remain anonymous.

If he has a bee in his singularly judicious bonnet, it is the big, big B of Bureaucracy. Whilst he floods the lawyer with a mild

## A SOLICITOR

light of benevolence, he denounces at every turn that encroaching, sinister figure, the bureaucrat. And yet the public servant at his best has as much of that public spirit which he claims for lawyers as any solicitor that ever proved a will. But perhaps this onslaught is the most human touch of all. Even our solicitor cannot understand his Income Tax return, and hates the man who sent it. Now the whole world is kin.

The solicitor does well to state so gallantly the claims of his profession. If the solicitors of England were to take ship to-morrow for the Islands of the Blest, this happy kingdom would revert in a fortnight to the social economy of the *kraal*. Orphans would go weeping and uncared for ; wills would litter the waste-paper baskets of wicked uncles ; trustees would run amok into mining shares ;

## STILL LIFE

rights of way would be infringed by grasping landlords ; and ancient lights would be snuffed out by speculative builders. Our solicitors are the frail barrier which we have erected (at a trifling cost) between civilization and the jungle.

## A FABIAN

THERE can be nothing more monotonous to its students than revolution, unless perhaps it is earthquake. Pestilence, like Cleopatra, has infinite variety ; battle, like Mr. Heinz, has fifty-seven varieties ; murder is a Protean pastime whose dazzling diversity has formed the delight of successive generations of readers of the Sunday papers ; and sudden death is perpetually providing new thrills for coroners. Revolution alone has its prescribed course and its unchanging ritual ; and the peculiarly blinding type in which Mr. Shaw always impels his publishers to print his prose works holds out little hope that we shall ever persuade a proletarian dictator to read John Tanner's *Revolutionist's*

## STILL LIFE

*Handbook* and so to introduce a new notion or so into the revolutionary's repertoire.

One invariably opens a revolution with the riot. It may be a bread-riot, like the march of the women to Versailles, or a no-bread-riot, like the other feminine invention of the hunger-strike. But whether it is the invasion of a parliament, like the September revolution of 1870, or the storm of a disused lunatic asylum, like the fall of the Bastille, or even a riot conducted by the monarch himself, like the burglarious entry of Charles I into the House of Commons, the first act of the revolution is always a crowded and popular business, faintly resembling the stage of His Majesty's Theatre during a production by Sir Herbert Tree.

Then, as the cheers subside, the soldiers fraternize with the mob; the licensed vic-

## A FABIAN

tuallers take down their shutters ; and the Three Days of July or the Five Days of February are an accomplished fact.

Far, far less entertaining is the second act of the revolution. It is the invariable practice of all revolutions played under Queensberry rules that a National Assembly should immediately meet and draft the constitution. All the neglected political writers of the last decade are hastily elected in order that they may recite to one another all their rejected contributions to the periodicals of the late *régime*. They formulate the Rights of Man. They set out on the long journey back to first principles, although happily most of them rarely get further than a synopsis of the works of Rousseau. And so the bright streams of revolutionary ardour wander uncertainly in the desert, until they are choked among the sands of the constitutional debates.

## STILL LIFE

It is the dreariest phase of any revolution, and its contemporaries are at a disadvantage compared with the historical student in that they cannot skip it.

That is why one owes to Mr. and Mrs. Webb a double (or perhaps one should say, in addressing this familiar dual personality, a quadruple) debt of gratitude for anticipating by a few years the constitution-making of the English Revolution and getting us successfully past it. Now we can go straight on to the Terror.

The reconstruction of the British machine by two of the best-informed students of its working is a singularly fascinating study. It is a great, if one accepts Mr. Arnold Bennett's epithet, or a dark, if one prefers Mr. Asquith's, adventure: and no one can walk round the walls of their Utopia without a drastic examination of his own constitutional

## A FABIAN

ideas and a thorough inspection of the machinery of government.

Briefly, Mr. and Mrs. Webb, confronted by Kings, Lords, and Commons, retain King, discard Lords, and cut Commons in two. The recipe sounds drastic; but it produces a sound working constitution which our proletarian dictator may season, garnish, and serve to taste. The Monarchy is let off with a caution as to its military predilections. The Lords (except the Lords of Appeal) are sent the way of the capitalist system. But the real crux of the scheme lies in the proposed partition of the last remaining limb of Parliament. The Commons are broken up into two Parliaments—a Political Parliament and a Social Parliament. The Political house controls the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and the Interior, whilst the Social house holds the purse-strings and



## STILL LIFE

exercises "whatever national control may from time to time be required over the nation's economic and social activities." One appreciates to the full the advantage of a constitution under which the military escapades in which Mr. Secretary Churchill had involved one house would be refused financial sanction on the motion of Mr. Chancellor Webb in Another Place. But it is in this partition of Parliament that the new constitution appears to present its most debatable point. It may increase the sum of human happiness to liberate Mr. Clynes from the necessity of listening to Lord Robert Cecil on foreign affairs and to exempt Sir Frederick Banbury from his present duty of playing audience to the domestic wrongs of Mr. Thomas. But one doubts somehow the wisdom of permitting financial (and therefore vital) decisions on Political questions to

## A FABIAN

be taken by a lobby full of frankly uninterested and necessarily ignorant members of the Social house. One is a little shy of dual sovereignty. Devolution, whether by areas or functions, may be sound and practicable, and it is manifestly desirable to provide somewhere a more intelligent arena than exists in Parliament for the discussion of industrial and allied economic problems. A National Industrial Council is an excellent and necessary thing. But sovereignty must remain in Parliament, and sovereigns (it was the experience of at least one member of the House of Stuart) are rarely at their brightest after they ~~have~~ been bisected.

And so, in a happy glow of socialized industry and vocational self-government, with its dual Parliament and its docile monarchy, the Co-operative Commonwealth dawns on Western Europe. It is all very

## STILL LIFE

sufficiently moderate and sane and practical, and one only hopes that the project will be adopted by our young barbarians. For the cup which Mr. and Mrs. Webb hold to our lips with such discretion is emphatically the cup that cheers but not inebriates.

## A JURIST

THE layman who staggers back from the learned publications of the Grotius Society with a stifled exclamation of " Good Grotius," has a fair excuse for his irreverence.

One had grown pretty used to pseudo-sciences as this end of time, when universities light-heartedly project Bachelors of Commerce and statistics are believed to be an end in themselves. But the study of International Law has always seemed the most solemn and splendid imposture of the lot. Indeed, the spectacle of a sham system of law, with its grave array of bogus commentators, and the majestic reverberation of their faked controversies afford so rare and splendid a show that one hopes nobody

## STILL LIFE

will ever be so heartless as to give it away. If there is anywhere (and there must be) a medal of International Law, one trusts that the pious founder expressed his grasp of the real situation by substituting on the obverse for the customary profile of Minerva the calm and non-existent features of Mrs. Harris, because it is the peculiar beauty which distinguishes International Law from her more vulgar sisters, Bigamy and Bankruptcy, that (like a sort of Cinderella in a pantomime by Mr. Henry James) there isn't any.

Indeed, it is the tragedy of most international lawyers that they pursue ~~their~~ their elusive subject with a precision admirably suited to the capture of such grossly corporeal game as the Sale of Goods Act, when its faint and fading degrees of non-existence would have defied the grasp of the most

## A JURIST

prehensile metaphors ever evoked by the brave old Genie from *The Golden Bowl*. The profession of the law has provided almost ten generations of men with a genteel intellectual amusement; but it is apparently only at the end of nineteen centuries of Christendom that Europe has succeeded, with a good deal of assistance from America, in arriving at the ripe conclusion that a condition precedent to the institution of International Law is the establishment of an international policeman.

Yet starting, as one does, with the worst will in the world towards the subject, one is free to admit that if there is not—in the police-court sense—any International Law worth speaking of, there is a most respectable body of international custom. Parts of it—those, for instance, which relate to the value of guaranteed neutrality, the treatment of

## STILL LIFE

non-combatant persons, and the destruction of merchantmen by maritime belligerents—were principally responsible for the inception and extension of a recent war. Indeed, at this moment the axes of mankind are busy in the jungle of International Law where Sir Frederick Pollock used formerly to bay the moon, as the organized conscience of humanity struggles to substitute for that network of custom and anecdote a real international legal system with the necessary equipment of tribunals and sanctions.

If you take any problem, you will find that its international history has run a startlingly uniform course.

The history of the inland waterways of the world, to use one example, is really the history of every other international matter. In the earliest phase the rivers were genuinely internationalized by the Roman Empire.

## A JURIST

Then the robber baron of the Middle Ages sent out his water-bailiffs, collected his dues, and enjoyed a period of supremacy and control which he used almost entirely to the misapplication of the doctrine of private property to public things. Next, as the baron faded away to survive only in the wicked uncle of pantomime, his place was taken by the barely distinguishable robber monarchy of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries. The protest of the community, which had found earlier expression in the discreet murmurs of Grotius and Vattel, broke vigorously out into the law of Nature preached so eloquently by the French Revolution in those cases in which Nature appeared to have shown an intelligent provision of the military needs of the French Republic. And, finally, the Nineteenth Century lumbered conscientiously along with its



## STILL LIFE

Rhine and Danube Commissions, which are stumbling under our eyes into a branch of the executive of the League of Nations. The internationalization by the League of all navigable international rivers may seem a drab termination for a picturesque subject. But it is better to tear our gaze for a moment from the pretty colours of the national flags. Europe has learnt gradually from the story of its waterways that private control of navigation is as indefensible as private smallpox. Perhaps one day it will apply the same lesson to private war.

## AN AMERICAN

YOUNG James Gallatin was an American who talked about waffles and terrapin ; but, unlike many Americans, he had ancestors. On the father's side James was a Swiss aristocrat, which his people felt acutely. In a passage of more than Trans-atlantic snobbery his father warned James, if he decided to remain in America, " never above all things to forget his birth and the duties that birth brings, always to be civil, particularly to those who were not his equals " : there were to be no flies on James. But in the dazzle of his ancestors one had almost forgotten his father. Now Pop was an American diplomat, and thereby hangs an essay by Lord Bryce. Albert Gallatin was

## STILL LIFE

one of the solemn gentlemen in neck-cloths who negotiated in 1814 the Peace of Ghent, and restored to the Anglo-Saxon community in two continents that unaccountable peace which passes all understanding. As diplomacy it is depressingly *bourgeois* ; but as an excuse for James Gallatin's first visit to Europe it is admirable. Other excuses were subsequently provided by the State Department, when it made his father Ambassador in France and England ; and that astonishing young man, who acted as his secretary, was definitely loose on European society.

James, as his British publisher merrily observed, " was a gay young spark ~~in~~ Paris." Even Lord Bryce expresses the opinion that he was " not so well regulated " as his sister Frances ; and the comparison does the young lady every credit. He went to St. Petersburg in 1813, when the Emperor was out of

## AN AMERICAN

town fighting Napoleon ; and he became the shuttlecock of Anglo-American diplomacy from Russia to Amsterdam, and from Amsterdam to London. James was shocked at the spectacle of Russian alcoholism, but it was nothing to the English Sunday., “English-women are not pretty ; they are either coarse or very delicate. Complexions fine, but too red”—young James was seventeen, but he had an eye. “I have seen the Prince Regent walking in the Mall. He is handsome” ; James’s ideal of male beauty would seem a little Vitellian, and his own appearance fell far below the standard set by H.R.H. : “I wore a suit of Chinese nankin, white silk stockings, high white choker, with a breast-pin of seed-pearls mother gave me before I left home. They call my hair auburn—I call it red.” James moved on with the American mission to Ghent—“the women

## STILL LIFE

are so ugly here"—and did his diplomatic duties.

Then began his real life, which consisted in meeting every one in Europe and making impertinent comments on them. James in his diary was as pert and vivid as one of Mr. Compton Mackenzie's chorus-girls; and the result is one of the most amusing works of minor history that has ever come to light. His tone bears an uncanny resemblance to the American pertness of Master Randolph Miller of Schenectady, as it was observed by the lake at Vevey forty years ago by Mr. Henry James's contemplative young Bostonian. That small boy of nine, with "an aged expression of countenance, a pale complexion, and sharp features," who played the *enfant terrible* in the tragedy of his sister Daisy, has the authentic Gallatin ring. They must often have said of James in the Galla-

## AN AMERICAN

tin family : “ He says he doesn’t care much about old castles. He’s only nine. He wants to stay at the hotel. Mother’s afraid to leave him, and the courier won’t stay with him ; so we haven’t been to many places.”

His speciality was insolent observation of the European scene. He found Napoleon fat and Madame de Staël “ oddly dressed, seeming to have one or two skirts on top of the other.” Joseph Bonaparte “ acts as if he were still King of Spain ” ; and Madame Récamier “ is beautiful, but I could not see great intelligence in her face.” He wrote a page of his diary in Voltaire’s chair at Ferney and Madame de Staël called him “ *Cupidon*.” Meanwhile James’s father went solemnly about Europe, looking up his ancestors and disapproving of the Bonapartes for being so middle-class. There is an extremely interesting conversation with

## STILL LIFE

Napoleon at Elba, in which the Emperor, "suddenly recollecting himself" in the midst of a political discussion, said: "*Mais ce n'est pas mon affaire—je suis mort.*" The gesture was borrowed later, consciously or not, by the Empress Eugénie.

Then James reached Paris, and his career began in earnest. David painted him as Cupid; and "I don't think father will approve of my picture." These were the days when Napoleon was marching on Paris with 1,100 men; and James walked about the streets and saw men turning their coats as they went. The Emperor sent for Albert Gallatin, and was distinctly rude to him when he declined to be drawn on the subject of American policy, having evidently forgotten (those Bonapartes were always *bourgeois*) that he was a Swiss aristocrat. And so the diary continues for fourteen years with

## AN AMERICAN

its delightful blend of personal and political comment. There were so many people in the world in those days ; and James's insolent appreciation of his surroundings is refreshingly, boyishly indiscreet. Madame de Boigne, Talleyrand, the Bourbons, the Prince Regent at Brighton, Canning, and innumerable little ladies hurry through the pages of this historical Revue ; and Albert Gallatin, the peacemaker, who is the solemn excuse for its preservation, appears from time to time, thinking—like Lord Burleigh.





## SOME ZIONISTS

NATIONALISTS, like most lovers and all idealists, are apt to be a trifle ridiculous in public. There is something about a political grand passion that seems to suspend a man, like the Prophet's coffin, somewhere between the sublime and the ridiculous, and there is in most cases no help for it. One must resign oneself to the splendid absurdity of the devotee. Romeo on the balcony, Mrs. Micawber reiterating her refusal ever to desert her husband, Robert Bruce's ill-timed passion for entomology, and Garibaldi freeing Italy in a four-wheeler, all fall, if one tilts the picture ever so little, into the faintly ludicrous attitude of persons in the grip of strong emotions. Any nationalist, whether

## STILL LIFE

the object of his affections is Achill Island or the Banat of Temesvar, is subject to this engaging failing. He is, like that impersonator of Hamlet (now, alas ! no more), who could be funny without being vulgar, most entertaining when his endeavour is to be most impressive.

But in all the rollicking, carnival procession of Donnybrook nationalists, frankly farcical irredentists, and patriots *pour rire*, there is one grim and sad-coloured exception. A single national movement of our time is insusceptible of entertainment, from whatever angle of wit or malice it may be regarded ; even the peerless lance of Mr. Max Beerbohm once splintered and broke against its sombre armour. The patriotism of the Jew—that pitiable affection which has no loved land to gaze at—is an utterly solemn thing. Perhaps it is so because it is so old that, like a tradi-

## SOME ZIONIST/S

tional funny story, it has ceased to be funny ; or perhaps because by the queer accident of Jewish history, it happens to be a sacred as well as a national thing. But, from whatever cause, it remains true that the Parliament at College Green, the ever Greater Serbia, and M. Paderewski's Polish *concerto* may be full of humorous possibility ; whilst no man will dare to smile on the grey day when the long line of bowed heads and stooping shoulders shuffles wearily out of the little towns of Eastern Europe, and winds slowly southward until the leaders look up and see the sun over the land of their promise and their deliverance.

Zionism, if one may use the term for a moment without begging any controversial question, is one of the few just and sacred causes which the war, like an absent-minded earthquake, has moved forward inadver-

## STILL LIFE

tently towards their splendid goal. Any narration of its evolution is the historical study of an idea. The material side of the movement has always seemed a matter of the profoundest indifference. Statistics of school attendance, of the export of Jewish-grown olives from Palestine, and of the number of gallons of water passed annually, through the restored system of irrigation are bound to cut such a pathetic figure next to the splendour of the national ideal which is expressed in them. Frankly, one is depressed rather than impressed by information of this type, and it is an infinite relief to escape from that obtrusion of it which is so dispiriting a feature of most national publications.

Patriots rarely excel in the composition of reliable prospectuses; and it should be realized that the strength of nationalists lies in the legitimate exercise of the imagination

## SOME ZIONISTS

in the sphere of eloquence, prophecy, and the less austere forms of poetry, but that as map-makers, mineralogists, and compilers of racial statistics they tend to be beneath contempt. Their geese are all, as Henry James must have written somewhere, so quite magnificently swans that as bird-fanciers they are more than a little misleading. Indeed, there is a wistful Mexican in one of Mr. Leacock's stories whose *cri du cœur* might have been borrowed by almost any of the "nations struggling to be free," whose energetic delegates picketed the revolving doors of the Hôtel Majestic. "Alas, my poor Mexico," he exclaimed, "she wants nothing but water to make her the most fertile country of the globe! Water and soil, these only, and she would excel all others. Give her but water, soil, light, heat, capital, and labour, and what could she not

## STILL LIFE

be ! ” That is an entirely legitimate travesty of what one fears to find on opening any study of Zionism by any leading Zionist. The material side of the movement is as unimportant to most of us as the pigments of a great picture or the geology of the Parthenon frieze. All that matters is the fact of the movement itself, and the slow but gathering momentum with which it moves.

The theme of a great part of the story should have a peculiar fascination for Englishmen. Without minimizing unduly the effort of foreign communities and the sympathy of Continental thinkers, it seems to show that the government of England has played a full and gracious part in the first and last scenes of the long tragedy of the Wandering Jew. Two and a half centuries ago the Lord Protector in Council reversed the Act of Edward I and readmitted the Jews to the territory

## SOME ZIONISTS

of the English Republic. This response of Puritan opinion to the Jewish appeal was not surprising, because at no other time have the English, or indeed any other European community, been more pre-eminently a people of the Book. A government whose heavy cavalry owed its victories to the inspiration of Joshua almost more than to the tactics of Gustavus Adolphus could hardly have made any other decision. But the present interest of it lies in the queer Zionist significance of the petition of Manasseh Ben-Israel and David Abrabanel. It was their belief that the return to Palestine would not be possible until the world-wide scattering of the race was complete. The return to the western islands was regarded as the final consummation of the Diaspora : " Let them enter England and the other end would be reached." So the last place of exile was to be the first



## STILL LIFE

station of the long homeward journey, and it was made possible by the Bible Christianity of the Commonwealth of England. And the last chapter of the same story was written when in the same capital city of Western Europe and, in the closing months of a European war His Majesty's Government gave formal British recognition to the Jewish effort, speaking through Lord Robert Cecil, in an utterance which would perhaps have startled the Elizabethan Lord Burleigh considerably less than it would have scandalized the Victorian Lord Salisbury.

It is impossible to summarize the story of three centuries of Jewish and European opinion. The record of Zionism is a queer procession of widely different figures, all starting from far separated points and each at last converging into the great stream that drives south and eastward across the world

## SOME ZIONISTS

towards the Holy Places. On the Jewish side one sees the slow drift that aligned the spasmodic romanticism of Disraeli with the patient effort of Sir Moses Montefiore and the faith and works of Pinsker, Hirsch, Herzl, Wolffsohn, Weizmann, and the rest; whilst the movement reacted on Europe in such odd forms as the Voltairean liberalism of Napoleon and his *Grand Sanhédrin*, Byron's facile and dilettante Semitism, and the urbane offer by Lord Lansdowne of a half-way house in East Africa, upon which the Foreign Office draftsman was amiably prepared to confer "a free hand in regard to municipal legislation and to the management of religious and purely domestic matters."

The Foreign Office has learnt several lessons since those quiet afternoons in 1903, and one of them stands out very clearly from the note which Mr. Balfour once contributed

## STILL LIFE

to a book on 'Zionism. His argument of one part of the Zionist case is a thoroughly skilful and attractive piece of writing. The average preface of the average statesman is a pitiable performance, because it is so apt to be written in a loud recitative with appropriate pauses for cheers and laughter. Mr. Balfour's conversational manner has a more level tone ; and one tends to forget in the easy flow of his talk that one is hearing one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State upon a question of high British policy. He faces frankly the deficiencies of the Jewish make-up :—

“ It is no doubt true that in large parts of Europe their loyalty to the State in which they dwell is (to put it mildly) feeble, compared with their loyalty to their religion and their race. How, indeed, could it be other-

## SOME ZIONISTS

wise ? In none of the regions of which I speak have they been given the advantage of equal citizenship, in some they have been given no right of citizenship at all. . . . It may well be true that when they have been compelled to live among their neighbours as if these were their enemies, they have often obtained, and sometimes deserved, the reputation of being undesirable citizens. Nor is this surprising. If you oblige many men to be money-lenders, some will assuredly be usurers. If you treat an important section of the community as outcasts, they will hardly shine as patriots.”

He puts with eloquence the essence of the Zionist case :—

“ In no other case are the believers in one of the greatest religions of the world to be found (speaking broadly) among the mem-

## STILL LIFE

bers of a single small people . . . in the case of no other religion are its aspirations and hopes expressed in language and imagery so utterly dependent for their meaning on the conviction that only from this one land, only through this one history, only by this one people is full religious knowledge to spread through all the world.”

And with something of the old dexterity which whitened the hair and shortened the lives of the early Tariff Reformers he eludes the point presented at his breast by the anti-Zionist opposition, by those “who, though Jews by descent, and often by religion, desire wholly to identify themselves with the life of the country wherein they have made their home. . . . They fear that it will adversely affect their position in the country of their adoption. . . . I cannot share their fears.”

## SOME ZIONISTS

The objection is one that might have been answered in a deeper tone. The fortunate group that is in a position to raise it is the smallest portion of a suffering race ; and it might well be retorted upon them that if by making a few hundred more aliens in London we can purchase a few thousand less graves in Poland, the price is not too large. For, in the last resort, if the highest argument for Zionism is to be found in the prophet Isaiah, the case for it on the narrowest grounds is—Kishineff.



## FLOWER O' THE LILY

ONE remembers to have seen somewhere a large cartoon in the symbolical manner. It depicted a tall young lady, whose hair was parted in the middle with the distressing severity which is the inevitable consequence of wearing classical draperies. She was stated in that inimitable little handwriting of Mr. Beerbohm's to represent the Twentieth Century pressing the English rose between the pages of History ; and one gathered from her expression (the effect may have been due either to a piece of draughtsmanship or to such an accident as happens to the most eminent caricaturists) that the emblematic vegetable upon which she was engaged was faintly malodorous.



## STILL LIFE

This adoption of floral symbolism for the representation of great nations is a pleasing device; and it comes to mind whenever one encounters on the continent of Europe a group of English roses (in nice, sensible blouses) engaged in extracting from a palace, a cathedral, or even, in extreme cases, from Calais Gare Maritime the peculiar savour of the French lilies. That scent is the most elusive thing in the whole range of European perfumes, and it would puzzle any spiritual analyst to lay down what precisely are its essential ingredients.

Indeed, it is probable that more incongruous things, styles, and people have been appreciatively described as "delightfully French" than that other crowded array of startling incompatibles, the "exquisitely Greek." The incautious Hellenist must be prepared to encounter anything from St.

## FLOWER O' THE LILY

Pancras Church to the galumphings of strange, barefooted females. But the Gallophil knows that he must include within the range of his affections the classicists, the romantics, the realists, the Parnassians, the Symbolists, and the merely indelicate, whilst his obedient eye wanders with equal appreciation over the cathedral of Chartres, the Eiffel Tower, and the portico of the Madeleine. Because, you know, they are all *so* French.

In the outcome, one is left wondering, a little feebly, what is the period in which France remained true to herself and was at her most French. The embittered theatre-goer is apt to reply that it was in the age of M. Sardou, before the taste for the eight-doored room went out of domestic architecture. For some it would be the French Renaissance, that singular piece which was staged so adorably by the Châteaux of Tou-

## STILL LIFE

raine, by the peaked black towers of Chenonceaux, the great curving roofs of Chambord, and the Chapel of St. Hubert at Amboise set on the great rampart like a jewel worn on a finger. Messrs. Thomas Cook and Son, who have a wider experience in these matters, would probably maintain, impressed by the ready accessibility of Versailles from Paris, that it was the age of the *Grand Monarque*. But they would be wrong; because a palace (even a Palace of Varieties) is rarely typical of a people, and the reign of Louis XIV was far more the preponderance of a palace than the domination of a man. *Amateurs* of Versailles may mistake an intimacy with Saint-Simon for a knowledge of French history, in much the same manner as the connoisseur of Boswell is apt to regard his collection of anecdotic *bric-à-brac* as a working substitute for a real acquaintance with

## FLOWER O' THE LILY

England in the Eighteenth Century. But it is in the age of Richelieu and Mazarin that, if the historical novelists are to be believed, we breathe the authentic air of France.

One may, on the whole, have worse guides to the true temper of a nation than the historical novelists. French history with them is divided quite simply into two periods. In the earlier, one perpetually watches Mr. Stanley Weyman clattering over the cobbles into Blois, as the evening mist creeps up from the Loire and curls and smokes along the high, open gallery of the Château; one hears his great boots pounding somewhere inside, as he calls for wine after a day's riding, and then the rattle and scrape of steel against steel, as the Cardinal's men keep their faithful *rendezvous* at the end of every chapter. And the second period finds one shouting oneself hoarse, as Mr. Carlyle bowls over the sentries

## STILL LIFE

and storms the Bastille, or mounted on a raw-boned draught-horse in the fog at Valmy and watching Mr. Belloc's back, as it jolts before us into action with the guns.

To that extent, therefore, one finds, as one picks a careful way across the welter of civil war and dull poetry which make up French history under the Cardinals, that one is in the garden of the lilies. One is certainly in Corneille ; one is almost in Rostand. The scene fades as the century wears on, and the great square *façade* of Versailles shuts down like a painted scene between ourselves and France. On the narrow stage in front of it a number of ladies and gentlemen played out the elegant comedy of the Eighteenth Century, when no country was so ill-bred as to display its national characteristics in public. And when next that curtain rises, France is in revolution.

## FLOWER O' THE LILY

Now, it is only a madman whose conversation is unchanged by fever ; for sane countries in revolution, like sane men in sudden illness, are unlike themselves. Possibly that is why Russia in upheaval seems much the same as Russia in repose : the only difference appears to be the transfer of all the lunatics who were latent in her fiction from private to public life. But with France and England a revolution is quite another matter. England in the revolution of 1649 or France in the revolution of 1793 has a strained eye and a quick, muttering speech that are utterly unlike their normal manner. It is only an unusual Englishman who passes his life in a sort of Old Testament charade ; and one can never see typical Frenchmen in those finely gesticulating orators of the Revolution whose life was one long, unacknowledged quotation from Plutarch.

## STILL LIFE

That is why the savour of the lilies eludes one again in the typical career of the Revolution ; perhaps it was unreasonable to expect it in the men who helped to tear them down. Yet the episode of the Girondins tells against the Parisian background of the Revolution, because it was a provincial business. Almost it has the quality of a breath of French air let into that closed and heated room which was Paris before the Terror. The Girondins, whom their contemporaries called the *Bor-delais*, were not drawn predominantly from the south, although Vergniaud himself sat with Guadet and Gensonné for the Gironde. But their strength was exclusively provincial, and their supporters (if that is the name for the men who left them to the headsman) were to be found in Normandy, Brittany, Picardy, Guienne, Provence, and the Limousin. With this provincial backing they went up to

## FLOWER O' THE LILY

Paris to challenge the revolutionary dictatorship of the Parisians. They were persons of high eloquence and extreme gentility, having a political hostess in Madame Roland and an unparalleled range of reference to the classics. But, like most provincials, they were behind the fashion ; and the people of Paris, who are always exacting in these matters, could not pardon the political *modistes* who offered them in 1793 the models of 1789. So they were sent singing to the scaffold in the great square. Vergniaud, who was typical of the group, watched his friends die and quoted Plato. But having poison in his pocket and the precedent of Demosthenes before his eyes, he yet let them bind him with the others under the knife. For friendship's sake he had waved from his lips the supreme classical allusion : it was a sacrifice before which Sir Philip Sidney's must pale into mere selfishness.



## STILL LIFE

Yet we cannot breathe the French air in all these cameos from the antique. One might as well accuse a Wedgwood and Adam drawing-room of insularity or look to hear the attenuated nudes of an allegory by Flaxman call for more beer and roar out "The Roast Beef of Old England." The Revolution was so much an affectation of antiquity ; the First Empire was so nearly a political *pastiche* whose elements were contributed in equal parts by Augustus and Charlemagne ; and it is not until the hungry Forties deepen into the well-nourished Fifties that we pass the gate once more into the garden of the lilies.

One may say, without begging too many questions, that three generations of Englishmen have found the threshold of France in the hall of the Gare du Nord. The French quality is epitomized for most of us by that

## FLOWER O' THE LILY

combination of frivolity with rectilinear town-planning which composes the city of Paris; and it is high time we realized that Paris is in almost every particular the creation of the Second Empire. It is not the voice of the Capets or the Valois or the Bourbons that one can hear ~~in~~<sup>in</sup> the rise and fall of the great Parisian *concerto*. But one catches at every turn faint echoes of Offenbach, faint gleams of his Emperor's waxed moustache.

The strong note of the great avenues, which run like a *motif* through the whole city, was struck by the Baron Haussmann; they were built as an embellishment of the Emperor's city and a convenience to his troops, because one cannot, even in street-fighting, shoot round corners. The air of *café chantant*, which breathes through the lamp-spangled trees of the Champs Élysées

## STILL LIFE

and wafts little ladies fur-wrapped in *coupés* across the Bois, is the air of Morny, of the days when the *coulisses* of the Chamber were barely distinguishable from the *coulisses* of the Opera. And the whole effect of the great roaring, gleaming, tinkling, stone-built place is in its essence and its details Napoleonic. It is not until the Bees are round the lilies that one may catch their true savour.

That is why one snatches eagerly at any relic of that real French time, when the pork-pie competed with the stove-pipe as the inspiration of hatters. The whole age is summarized with exactitude in the career of a Spanish lady of family whose mother was *Camarera mayor* to Queen Isabella; she was born in an earthquake, married an Emperor, and died in exile. One has come to think of the Empress Eugénie as the uncomplaining subject-matter of the recol-

## FLOWER O' THE LILY

lections of English governesses. But she was once the leading lady of a very different piece, when the world swung round Paris and Paris took its time from Compiègne.

The slow march of European education has brought the Emperor's "doctrine of nationalities" into fashion under the amiable pretence that it is the latest thing from America. But his Empire, as we are coming to learn, left more to the world than the names of a few French defeats. The modern history of Europe has its opening moves in the Sixties; and the centre of that age was a dull-eyed man who was an Emperor, but married a lady. He rode out, aching and rouged, under the Prussian gun-fire along the bare hill-sides outside Sedan, and showed the world that it had still a lesson to learn from that family of artillerists and adventurers called Bonaparte.



## SOME LAWYERS

AN ancient and, judged by contemporary standards, an honourable profession has long made its home in the Temple, <sup>once</sup> ~~once~~ described (doubtless in anticipation of the event) as a den of thieves. The traffic of the metropolis goes round and (in the case of the District Railway) underneath this haunt of ancient strife; and its precincts—the Temple has always been credited with the possession of precincts—are undisturbed by the thunder of urban life. It is in the world of London, but not of it, an aloofness that stands in singular contrast to the thrusting persistence with which its professional population has steadily permeated, with none too peaceful penetration, the lives of their fellow-coun-

## STILL LIFE

trymen. Other trade unions have dictated the price of our bread, the warmth of our firesides, and the specific gravity of our beer. But it was reserved for the oldest, the narrowest, and the most powerful of the guilds to tamper with the quality of our jokes. There is about the vast majority of legal facetiæ a quiet but sustained ghastliness that has earned the candid detestation of the lay public ; and it is a tribute to the slow charm exhibited by the *raconteur* of a recent collection to say that it will really bring illumination to all who wish to find out what exactly these lawyer fellows are up to, and that it will be read by them, not only with useful instruction on the ideals of a great profession, but with rare enjoyment of good stories. And, if one of these lawyer fellows may say so, the compiler has deserved well of the little republic of the law

## SOME LAWYERS

by interpreting its ideals, its standards, and its manners and customs in a way that should leave no excuses for future misunderstanding.

He quotes with indignation Disraeli's summary of the legal career as "port and bad jokes till fifty, and then a peerage." But he expresses his gratitude for having escaped the infliction of a peerage by sparing his public the corresponding infliction of bad jokes. The flow of anecdote under which he conceals the serious business of describing the legal world is a delightful stream in which one may fish in a random way for pearls. Any trustee will thrill with sympathy at the story of the examiner who said :

"My rule is to pass a man who gets fifty per cent. of full marks. Now, I asked him



## STILL LIFE

two questions. The first was, "What is the rule in Shelley's case?" He answered that it had something to do with poetry. Well, that was wrong. The second was, "What is a contingent remainder?" He answered that he was sure he didn't know. Well, that was right, and so I passed him.

That, of course, is precisely what a contingent remainder is.

And no litigant whose counsel has, after the manner of counsel, persistently misnamed him throughout the conduct of a case, will be able to withhold the tribute of a cheer (which will, in the ancient ritual, be instantly suppressed) at the bitter cry of the Judge :

"Mr. Attorney, so long as you consistently called the plaintiff, whose name is Jones, by

## SOME LAWYERS

the name of Smith, and the defendant, whose name is Smith, by the name of Jones, the jury and I could follow you; but now that you have introduced the name of Robinson without indicating in any way whether you mean it to refer to the plaintiff or to the defendant, or to both indifferently, we are beginning to get bothered a bit."

The truth is, however disrespectful one may feel about the unsuitability of trade-union jokes for the general public, that the jokes of the great trade union of the law are universally applicable. There may be—there indubitably are—tales of a technical and slightly carboniferous character about hair-breadth "escapes" that get roars of laughter at the annual meeting of the Gasfitters' Finishers' Union. The Textile Workers may

## STILL LIFE

wipe their eyes, and waggle their hands feebly over a perfectly excruciating story about jacquards and hackling pins ; and the Union of Journalists may (for all that I know) have their little jokes. But so few of us are gas-fitters, or weavers, or (really) journalists, that the points of their professional humour whizz harmlessly overhead—like the spears in Homer. But we are all, in so far as we are debtors, creditors, tradesmen, customers, husbands, fathers, sons, or rate-payers, members of the great society of the law, even omitting the smaller, esoteric group of the barristers, solicitors, and jurymen. The law is at once the fairy-godmother and the wicked uncle of contemporary English life. Without it there would be no marrying or giving in marriage, no burglaries, street accidents or assaults, no bankruptcies or arson, no bigamy or

## SOME LAWYERS

perjury, nor any of those interminable police mysteries or “breezes in Court” which are the salt of modern life. Great is the law, and—against whatever competing topics—it will prevail.



## LADY HAMILTON

THE trouble with Lady Hamilton is that Nelson left her to the nation, when he ought to have left her to Sir William Hamilton. Perhaps it was because the nation is the normal legatee of pictures ; and Emma was in herself the collected works of Romney. At any rate, this singular legacy of a beautiful woman and her daughter was not appreciated by its inheritors. It is an old quarrel whether her unhappiness was the work of an ungrateful nation ; and there is small need to argue it now. It is quite possible that an unobtrusive and adequate pension might have been found for Lady Hamilton after Trafalgar. But she was not content to live inconspicuously upon the Consolidated Fund ;

## STILL LIFE

all the best people did it, but Emma was a *parvenue*. She thirsted for recognition, like any trade union ; and, having learnt heroics in the kitchen, she saw the dramatic value of her position as Nelson's quasi-widow and was indisposed to sit like Patience on the Nelson Monument. The results were seen in her ten years' tragedy between Trafalgar and Waterloo.

They were not years of neglect, unless notoriety is neglect ; and they need not have been years of poverty, if she had learnt how to keep a fortune. But it was from this period, when she was blackmailed by Sicilian, persecuted by conveyancers, and imprisoned in the King's Bench, that her career got its peculiar flavour of futility. She had a past ; but she had no future, which (as any grammarian can see) is highly irregular, and forms a striking contrast to that greater Emma who was the inspiration of Wilkins Micawber.

## LADY HAMILTON

The decline and fall of her empire is the chief cause of its fame. If Lady Hamilton had disappeared in 1805, she would have figured as largely in English history as Walewska or Georges in the history of the First Empire. But "Emma forlorn and weeping for Nelson" is a person to write about; and the biographers have buzzed round her memory like the duns round her front door.

Her beginnings are interesting to the collector; but one feels that most of her biographers might have given us a little more life with Nelson and a little less life below stairs. Emma Lyon was the child of an affair at Hawarden, although her meteoric career was more suggestive of Hughenden; and we may, if we feel that she should be ushered into the world with a blast on the trumpet of the *Family Herald*, accept the story which gives her a gentleman for a



## STILL LIFE

father. He became an amateur blacksmith, and died of a consumption that may be described with a more than Five Towns' gusto. Like all literary babies, little Emma "crowed" in the pages of her biographies; she also became astonishingly pretty and went into service as a nursemaid. Somewhat injudiciously she was removed to a situation in London, and was promoted kitchen-maid. She lost the place on account of some amateur theatricals, conducted in her mistress's clothes on the kitchen table; and with a stage-struck colleague she applied to Sheridan for a part at Drury Lane. She was rejected, and was assisted to a less desirable situation by a man called Angelo. It may be the misfortune of the subject rather than the fault of her biographers, but from this point all the old men are unpleasant old men and none of the young men are nice young men.

## LADY HAMILTON

A sea-captain, a baronet, and Charles Greville pass rapidly across the stage, until, by a singular transaction, she was transferred by Charles to his uncle, Sir William Hamilton, who married her and made her Ambassadors of His Britannic Majesty at Naples. In Naples, which was ruled by a stupid king who kept a cookshop, she formed a valuable friendship with the Queen. Emma was a singular acquaintance for the daughter of Marie Theresa; but royalty could not be too particular in the year 1793. She learned to spell late in life; but even as Ambassadors she wrote "the King, and me sang duetts 3 hours." In Naples Emma met Nelson, who was in charge of the Mediterranean blockade; and there, rather than in England, she lived out the best years of her life. So in Naples one may bid her, in her own orthography, "Adué."



## A WHIG PRINCESS

WHAT a pity it is that people in public life do not dress better. One reads with polite amusement the periodical laments of the *Tailor and Cutter* over the sartorial imperfections of a new Cabinet. The spectacle of a solemn leader-writer wringing his hands over the oddity of an official trousering or the disturbing tendency of the Lord Chancellor to deepen the roll-collar may be mildly entertaining. But at the same time there is something in it. One may sacrifice too much to appearances: yet one may also sacrifice too little. Mr. Asquith's taste in ties may, for all that I know, have precipitated purists in neckwear into the Coalition. The collar, from behind which poor Mr. Bonar Law

## STILL LIFE

regarded the universe, was conceivably a source of strength to Communism in Glasgow. Mr. Lloyd George's post-war blend of a morning-coat with a bowler hat, which was always so reassuring to foreign delegates at Peace Conferences since it confirmed the correctness of their own selection, may well have proved a grave obstacle to Liberal reunion. These are mysterious matters ; and it is only the fact that all historians are badly dressed which has kept them out of the textbooks.

One can hardly help noticing, if one compares the statesmen of any period with its fashion-plates, that in the days when politicians were better at dressing they were considerably better at politics. Sir Robert Peel strapped his trousers under his boots and wore the most admirable fancy waistcoats. Mr. Stanley Baldwin, if one may

## A WHIG PRINCESS

trust the photographer who forms ~~so~~<sup>is</sup> valued a part of the staff at "Chequers," affects a simpler style modelled (may one say it without offence ?) rather upon the golf professional or the jobbing gardener. There can be no doubt which of the two would appeal to the *Tailor and Cutter* as the better Chancellor of the Exchequer; and the *Tailor and Cutter*, as so often, would be right.

There is, there obviously is a significance in these small matters which escapes our public men. We are all far too much under the sway of that dangerous heresy of the late Nineteenth Century which laid it down that if one has style, one is of necessity lacking in the deeper qualities. That is why our historians, eager to avoid all imputations of style, habitually embalm their wisdom in a dialect of the most repulsive angularity.

## STILL LIFE

Archæologists demonstrate their soundness by writing like navvies ; and economists, nervous of the grave discredit which might attach to a well-turned sentence, pass boldly beyond the limits of rational speech and float at ease on the outer spaces of mathematical symbolism. Style has gone the way of staining window-glass and the rest of the lost arts ; and it is small wonder that our politicians, always sensitive to a popular breeze, have escaped from it as completely as everybody else.

There are an inelegance, a bagginess, a lack of crease about the political exterior which almost exceeds the studied *négligé* of the teaching profession. Yet there is no inherent reason why statesmanship should be perpetually down at the heels and over at the knees. It was not always so ; and in the days when it was not, one cannot help feeling that its

## A WHIG PRINCESS

political practice was a good deal better. The great days of English politics seem to fall in the half century between the Battle of Waterloo and the death of Lord Palmerston. That was an age when a party leader was at least as well known in the country as a popular jockey ; and it is permissible to add that in almost every case he dressed better than a successful actor. Perhaps Mr. Disraeli went a little too far. But the general standard of the political exterior was admirably high. The towering wings of Sir Robert Peel's collar, the dye on Lord Palmerston's whiskers, the elegance of Sir John Pakington's riding costume (he habitually wore spurs in Cabinet), even the more recent splendours of Mr. Gladstone's tea-rose—every one of these is the mark of an age when the politicians had style. Public business could be modishly conducted by gentlemen, and



## STILL LIFE

the people of England regarded them with that respect which is always reserved for fashion.

That is why one welcomes the recurrent rescue of old letters from obscurity. They are often lacking in serious political significance, but how amusing from the social angle. The doors of forgotten drawing-rooms swing slowly open ; and one seems to see the grave, corseted forms of Victorian statesmen conversing elegantly with one another upon the Condition of the People, or turning aside between whiles to drop a *mot* for the appreciative simpers of their ladies. One writer has a delightful vision of the Whig hostesses “ billowing, sailing, gliding in their hoops and crinolines, their scarves falling from white shoulders, their great bonnets sometimes framing, sometimes hiding, their faces with the little

## A WHIG PRINCESS

bunches of curls at each side, or the severe and glossy bandeaux and loops hiding their ears."

One is past the powdered magnificence of the Eighteenth Century. Even "the old Whig dress, a blue coat with brass buttons and a buff waistcoat," seemed a trifle odd. But it was still an age of rouge and chandeliers, when ministers rode down to their offices on horseback and manly sport vied with female accomplishment in the great country houses where the real rulers of England reigned. A career in those days was like the Imperial migrations from the Tuileries to Compiègne and from Compiègne to Fontainebleau and from Fontainebleau to Biarritz. Elizabeth Lamb opened, among her native Melbournes, at Bocket; as Lady Cowper she kept house at Panshanger; and when she married

## STILL LIFE

Palmerston, she moved on to Broadlands. It was a grave, delightful business to be a Whig princess.

In her earlier phases, when George IV was king, there was still a strong strain of native coarseness, even in the manners of the great world. One never quite knew what the gentlemen were 'up to downstairs in the dining-room; and a faint flavour of the tap-room still hung about their recreations. A young lady could report to her brother, with genteel underlinings, that

“Papa hates London and sighs for Brighton. How people change! Altho' he *never* exceeds Tierney's prescription and only drinks one glass of Negus, he manages *somehow or other to be drunkish*. I suppose it must be the fog that makes him so.”

## A WHIG PRINCESS

A daughter's piety, it seems, was less scandalized by Papa's intoxication than by the inadequacy of the cause.

Yet there is a strange modernity about the domestic predicaments of Lady Caroline Lamb (they called her "Cherubina" in the family):

• "The Servants at Brocket still continue to pass thro like the figures in a Magic Lanthorn—they come on and go off—a new Cook whom Hagard was all expectation to see from her great character and her fifty Guinea wages staid, I believe, only one week. Dear Hagard is worth his weight in gold. These are pearls thrown to Swine, such a pair of Jewels as Hagard and Dawson! Hagard's philosophy talking of Caroline is so good. He says she can't be any worse, so one hopes she may get better . . ."

## STILL LIFE

One can well imagine that a lady, who managed to scare Byron into hostility to the sex, was an imperfect housekeeper.

On the political side, Lady Palmerston's correspondence with her brother is of more tepid interest. Frederick Lamb's activities were exclusively diplomatic; and it is not always easy to recover the contemporary rapture over a sally of Princess Lieven or a dry aside of Prince Metternich. For a good many years, during her first marriage, the slow development of her friendship with Palmerston was the most important thing about her. His letters genial commonplace. He frequently when he is on t one likes to think of him the sunshine and despis There was a strange encoi stones of Boulogne in 18

## A WHIG PRINCESS

little boy—"a lying little dog"—singing a song that must have lingered from the wars of the First Empire :

*Bientôt plus de Guerre !  
Tous les Rois sont morts.  
Il n'y a que l'Angleterre  
Qui résiste encore.*

*Tiggi riggi Dong Dong La Beauté  
Tiggi riggi Dong Dong ah c'est beau !*

That rather hoarse chorus has the quality that one associates with one of Du Maurier's dreadful dream-*gamins* ; and one can picture the big Englishman in whiskers watching the little prancing figure (he was eight years old) ingeminating his *Tiggi riggi Dong Dong* in the September sunshine of 1815.

A stranger phenomenon, perhaps, is Lord Palmerston attending the solemn lectures of M. Guizot in Paris. Grave gentlemen discoursed to him "upon the Early History of Civilization in Europe, upon the Progress

## STILL LIFE

and Origin of European Languages, and upon the state of the Mechanical Arts and Industry of the Civilized World.” But he continued to take considerably more interest in “a new Opera of Caraffa from *The Bride of Lammermuir*” and the constitutional inability of Frenchmen to be blackballed for clubs with gentlemanly reticence. The July revolution of 1830 elicited a strange cry of triumph from him :

“ We shall drink the cause of Liberalism all over the world. Let Spain and Austria look to themselves ; this reaction cannot end where it began, and Spain and Italy and Portugal and parts of Germany will sooner or later be affected. This event is decisive of the ascendancy of Liberal Principles throughout Europe ; the evil spirit has been put down and will be trodden under foot.

## A WHIG PRINCESS

The reign of Metternich is over and the days of the Duke's policy might be measured by algebra, if not by arithmetic."

That is the authentic Palmerston, who put down the mighty from their seat, always provided that the mighty had committed the initial enormity of being foreigners.

At fifty-five he married Lady Cowper. His bride was fifty-two; and for twenty-six years they went bravely on together. The partnership, one might have thought, was a trifle dull; but they carried it with an air of high romance. She gave parties for him and collected young supporters or asked queer foreigners—"Cavour, is that his name?—the man we were to meet at Hathertons"—or warned her husband about draughts. Sometimes she told him how to manage the Queen a little better:



## STILL LIFE

“I am sure it would be better if you *said* less to her—even if you act as you think best. I often think there is too much knight erranty in your Ways. You always think you can convince people by Arguments . . . I should treat what she says more lightly and courteously, and not enter into argument with her, but lead her on gently, by letting her believe you have both the same opinions in fact and the same wishes, but take sometimes different ways of carrying them out.”

Perhaps women would make the best ministers when there is a queen on the throne. But the lesson was lost on Lord Palmerston, and he still continued to distress his sovereign.

The queer old couple lived on ; and one of them became the uncrowned king of mid-Victorian England, whilst the other gave

## A WHIG PRINCESS

great parties at Cambridge House on Saturday nights “looking so well in her diamonds.” “One knows,” as someone wrote, “there is a real crisis when Lady Palmerston forgets her rouge and Lord Palmerston omits to dye his whiskers”; until at last Palmerston came home ill, and there was no more rouge. The tired old hand wrote in its diary: “I was up all night. I can write no more.” Palmerston went first; and Em was left waiting alone. Once she turned a faded smile to a daughter (she was almost ninety now) and said, “I think, Fanny, I must really begin low bodies again in the evening.” And at the last there was a tired old lady in a great four-post bed, in a room next the dining-room at Brocket.



## THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

THE tragedy of the Second Empire was a tragedy of anticlimax. There had been a melancholy dignity about the dying fall of the first Emperor. He struck an attitude, even in defeat. But all the *panache* fell away from Napoleon III and his court, as his carriage passed the Belgian frontier and Eugénie's cab went down the Rue de Rivoli. His St. Helena was staged at Wilhelmshöhe, in the humiliatingly comfortable surroundings of a provincial German palace; and the Empress, who would have worn so becomingly the weeds of exile, was denied the dignity of Zenobia in the unimpressive surroundings of a seaside hotel on the South Coast. Then someone found her at home at

## STILL LIFE

Chislehurst, and the Emperor of the French became a suburban resident, whilst his wife sat and wondered when the neighbours would begin to call. Fate was kinder to him, since he died after two years of dismal gentility. But for her the long years between *les événements*, as she used to call them, and the distant day when she faded out of life in Spain were an interminable, bitter repartee by Destiny upon her sudden rise. The vivid figure, which had inspired romantic gentlemen to paint pictures, write verses, or design fantastic dresses, became a genteel reminiscence for English governesses, a faint memory for afternoon callers, a dim vision among the teacups at Farnborough. Even her bereavement, so tragic and so complete, seemed to have been appropriated by Queen Victoria as an ornament of her own.

Memories of that period of her long exile

## THE EMPRESS EUGENIE

are, with few exceptions, of the most slender significance. How an old lady smiled, the ghost of a sweeping curtsey which had once held the Tuileries, the sudden dab of a handkerchief when someone spoke a dead name, the long, unbroken silences when they asked her about the past—one cannot make history of these things; and it is an epilogue that has nearly ceased to be tragic, since all the characters are dead. It is almost as though the curtain refused to fall on the last speech of Fortinbras, and we were left to sit staring at the bodies on the stage. Yet an industrious posterity has filled volumes with the silence of Eugénie; and ever and again one more lady comes with her memories of that still figure in her English garden.

The greater part of their reminiscences is of tepid interest—the times of meals, the furniture, a gracious reply or so, the tooth-

## STILL LIFE

picks on the table, and Eugénie's foible for buttonless gloves. But once or twice they deviate into historical interest. There is in one of them definite confirmation from Eugénie herself that in 1870, when she held the reins in Paris as Regent, she relied on chloral for her sleep. Those dreadful weeks haunted her after forty years, when the French armies were swept once again along the roads which had puzzled MacMahon: "I have been through it all before. . . . The same names—same places—same objective—Amiens!" There is the revelation that Queen Victoria celebrated "some treaty between England and France"—probably Mr. Cobden's treaty of 1860—with a gift in the *baroque* style so frequently affected by ruling houses—"a sweet little Union Jack in diamonds, rubies, and sapphires." And, above all, there is the story that when they were

## THE EMPRESS EUGÉNIE

waiting at Dover in 1871 to meet the Emperor on his return from Germany, they passed in a narrow passage at the Lord Warden Hotel the Orleans princes on their way back to France. The Empress curtsayed ; and the exigencies of irony were satisfied.

But perhaps the brightest passages are those that relate to the visits of Eugénie to Queen Victoria. There is always something piquant in the juxtaposition of the two ladies in crape. How far she had travelled from Fontainebleau and the bright days when she dictated the millinery of Europe and even the suburban young lady of Lewis Carroll's Swinburnian apologue had

“done up her hair in the style that the Empress had brought into fashion.”

*Amateurs* of Victoria may welcome a new mannerism—“out of deference to the Queen's



## STILL LIFE

feelings . . . a tacit understanding that one must never<sup>b</sup> be seen on her path." It seems that the august lady disliked any casual encounter, "as it would put her in the awkward position of either being discourteous and passing them by, or being forced to talk to them when she feels disinclined to do so." Thus it comes that one gets flying visions of Prince Henry of Battenberg and the Duke of Connaught hiding in strange cottages, and even the Prince of Wales dodging behind bushes in the grounds of Osborne. It is queer and entertaining, as Mr. St. John Ervine would say, to find her with Victoria. But what a *milieu* for Eugénie.

## K.

BIOGRAPHY, like big game hunting, is one of the recognized forms of sport ; and it is as unfair as only sport can be. High on some far hill-side of politics or history the amateur marks down his distant quarry. Follows an intensely distasteful period of furtive approach to the subject, which leads the deer-stalker up gullies and ravines and the biographer through private letters and washing-books. The burns grow deeper and wetter, the letters take a more private and less publishable turn, until at last our sportsman, well within range, turns to his publisher, who carries the guns, and empties one, two, and (if the public will stand it) three barrels into his unprotesting victim ; because it is

## STILL LIFE

a cruel truth, that the subjects of *Lives* are rarely themselves alive. It is at once the shame of biographers and the guarantee of their marksmanship that they are perpetually shooting the sitting statesman.

But if biography is to have any higher value than mere anecdote, its central figure must bring something more to the historical imagination than the titillation of scandal or the whisper of revelations. It is not enough that he should confide to us what the Duke really said in the Lobby when the Bill was thrown out, or whether it is true that the Regent upon one occasion went somewhat further than he was hitherto believed to have gone. But he must be a person whose career summarizes in a convenient form the tone and temper of his age ; and that, in a quite surprising degree, does the career of Lord Kitchener.

## K.

One had come to regard him so mechanically as a unique phenomenon in British life. But this fallacy, like so many more, is a legacy of 1914, when a clean-shaven country swept an anxious hand over its upper lip in search of some counterpoise to Hohenzollern and Hindenburg, and found in Kitchener the one moustache whose dimensions were sufficiently *sabreur*, the one collar whose altitude was adequately Teutonic to fill the military bill. The paragraphists have spoilt our appreciation of him with their dreary insistence on his Himalayan solitude. In reality, he was a highly-generalized version of that exquisitely characteristic figure, the Victorian soldier. In his first phase, when Mr. Disraeli was Prime Minister, one finds in him a rich example of that blend of soldiering with Christian connoisseurship which rose to its greatest and most baroque heights in

## STILL LIFE

General Gordon. "My dear Miss Conder," he wrote to a brother-officer's sister, "I send you some information about the vestments of the Church of England that you wished to have"; and thereupon he makes such play with Stoles, Albs, Copes, Tunicles, and Chasubles as would do credit to a diocesan conference, and closes upon an arch sectarian joke ("I must now end this popish letter"), whose positively kittenish note would have proceeded more naturally from a pale young curate. In the next chapter he becomes a more popular figure, that might have walked into any magazine story between the year 1885 and the second Jubilee without exciting the reader's suspicion. The scene is perpetually set upon a shifting carpet of burning sand; under the coppery glare of an African sky a few Baggara crouch muttering round a low fire outside a black tent or so; and there is a

## K.

general feeling that something has been happening beyond Wady Halfa or above the Tenth Cataract or in Darfur, or Kordofan. But a tall figure strides in among them. The hair, the dress, the beard are Mahdist enough ; but that gesture of command can only be an Englishman's—it is Captain —— of the Frontier Force ! That is a popular frame into which almost every picture of Kitchener's early and middle life will fit. He was intensely typical of the Victorian scene ; and it is that fact which gives to his long career its real value for the picturesque historian.

Born a few months before the Great Exhibition, when the Prince Consort had eleven years still to live, he enjoyed an education which was the plaything of Irish governesses and the holiday task of a Rugby master. Indeed it may well be that if he had gone nearer to any public school, he would have

## STILL LIFE

grown up a less perfect public school boy : the system might have provoked reactions. At the age of thirteen some educational eccentricity of his family directed him to a school near Geneva ; and it is a solemn thought that a few years earlier the crocodile in which the gaunt young Kitchener paced might have passed on that Calvinist shore another line of schoolboys in which ambled, out of step, mildly observant, his head deep in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, Master Henry James, junior, of Cambridge, Mass. But one doubts, somehow, if an encounter would have led to an intimacy.

Five years later, at Woolwich, he set his foot to the military ladder and diversified his technical studies with the dreadful pastime of reading the Old Testament in Hebrew. Warfare began for him with a flying glimpse of the almost equally flying operations of the

## K.

Second Army of the Loire in Brittany. The Franco-Prussian War had attracted large numbers of able-bodied Anglo-Saxon sight-seers : Sir Charles Dilke had been at Wörth with the Crown Prince, Mr. Labouchere was in Paris with Trochu, and it was only natural that two gentlemen cadets should take train through the snow in search of Chanzy. His service in 1871, which was almost confined to taking pleurisy in a balloon, was rewarded by the issue of a French war-medal in 1913 ; the delay was a characteristically graceful tribute by the Ministry of War to the methods of British military administration. He was retrieved by an anxious parent, scolded at the Horse Guards by a maternal Commander-in-Chief of the Blood Royal, and finally gazetted to the Royal Engineers.

The army which the Duke of Cambridge commanded for Queen Victoria in her early



## STILL LIFE

widowhood can hardly have provided a young enthusiast with an exhilarating arena. While Frenchmen, Germans, Austrians, Italians, and Danes had seen creditable and recent service on the continent of Europe, British soldiers had little beyond doubtful memories of the Crimea to set beside their archaic recollections of the wars against Napoleon. It was a depressing period, in which the Line regiments were provided with an unconvincing imitation of the Prussian helmet, in a vague hope that it would act as an agreeable substitute for the Prussian Staff College. Three years of Chatham and Aldershot, with an excursion to the Austrian *Kaisermanöver* of 1873, proved thoroughly unsatisfying. Bridging and the field telegraph failed to bind Kitchener to the Engineer's career; and in 1874 that singular young man was loaned to the Palestine Exploration

## K.

Fund for its survey of the Holy Land. It is possible that he was not precisely such stuff as Schliemanns are made of. But something of a Hebraist and more of a Bible student, he entered keenly on any work in which the pill of archæology was gilded with the glamour of oriental travel. For eight years he disappeared into the dust of the Levant. His cartography was sometimes leavened with street-fighting; and in 1878 he was honoured with a special summons to Cyprus, in order to survey the latest, if somewhat uncut, diamond which Lord Beaconsfield had added to his astonished sovereign's crown. In the later weeks of the Russo-Turkish War he followed the Turks into Thrace, an exploit which the gyrations of Turkish policy unfortunately prevented him from turning to propagandist account during the war of 1914; and a few years

## STILL LIFE

later he almost turned archæologist for life on a proposal of the British Museum that he should excavate in Assyria and Babylonia. This accident, which so nearly happened, resembles that chance which almost sent Mirabeau to commence bookseller in Kiel, and that other which so nearly promoted General Bonaparte to the post of instructor in the Turkish artillery.

With the dawn of the Eighties Egypt took the stage ; and until she left it after Omdurman, Kitchener was perpetually in her train. He appears first as a Bimbashi of Egyptian cavalry, who heightened its prestige by inventing an incredible light blue uniform ; then as a commander of native irregulars and secret agent in the Korosko and Bayuda Deserts ; and finally as the Sirdar who made the Egyptian Army, rounded up Osman Digna, and broke the Khalifa. His Egyptian

## K.

service had in it a real note of service for Egypt; and his militarism was never so military, his Imperialism not half so imperial as the tone of the men who followed in his wake. His final biography does much to clear his work from the unpleasant colour with which it had been daubed by such words as Bishop Brindle's detestable crow of episcopal triumph :

“The tribes had taken Dongola, and we had to move them out. We did so—thoroughly. They ran for their lives, mothers throwing down their babies on the sands, leaving them as hostages.”

That was never the tone in which Kitchener thought of his work : perhaps he had not read enough Kipling.

In his next period (it was not his second manner, because his manner never changed),

## STILL LIFE

he finished the war in South Africa and reorganized the forces in India. As he was a successful, s<sup>t</sup> he was not a romantic soldier ; and the man who had substituted railway-lines for heroism in the Sudan preferred barbed wire to grand strategy in Cape Colony. His Indian exploit possesses for connoisseurs, of Lord Curzon all the interest whic<sup>h</sup> attaches to an Ajax who defied the lightning without ill-effects ; and his government of Egypt in the years between the coronation of King George V and the outbreak of war has a considerable provincial importance.

But his career, which had been passed hitherto among coloured peoples, was to acquire suddenly the deeper significance which is inseparable from the direction of a great white State. A man made bad use of a Browning pistol in a back street in Bosnia ; the world of white men stood to arms ; and

## K.

Kitchener came to the War Office to serve, so long as he lived, as the first military adviser of the country which he made the first military power in the world. By a queerness of which only Englishmen are capable his war service has become a subject of controversy. One of our Ciceros, in his anxiety to exhibit himself as the only authorized saviour of the State, has his doubts. One of our conquerors, whose pen, since he exchanged G.H.Q. for the Viceregal Lodge, is unquestionably mightier than his sword, has his misgivings. And what remains? The record of a man who built broad and deep in the first months, and smaller men took the fame of it in the last; who stamped with his foot upon the ground, and men in ranks rose out of it. His achievement is of the order of deeds which men write upon stone. But they do not argue about them.



## RONALD POULTON

### I

I CAN remember Ronald Poulton (and one is left now with memories instead of friends) in his first term at Rugby. The little scene was set between the bare trees and brick walls of Caldecott's playing-field on a half-holiday afternoon in the late autumn of 1903. One can almost recover the pleasurable air of privileged loafing with which one celebrated a temporary exemption from games, parading the six-foot way between the different grounds, watching the gratifying exertions of other people, and wearing such mufflers and overcoats as almost made one believe in the failing health to which one owed the rest. Someone who was well



## STILL LIFE

informed about the School House (and its contents were as much a special subject as the Balkan races) said that they had a new man who was a fast three-quarter. He gave his name, and pointed out a lean boy with the figure of a ferret, who detached himself for an instant from the scramble of Whites and Stripes. That was the first that some of us saw of Ronald Poulton.

In the following term the Sports must have lifted him out of the ruck of little boys in large collars, and people began to know his name. He rose from Caldecott's to Big-side (I suppose that he never descended with most of us to Benn's), and the swerving run with the rigid, down-stretched arms moving from side to side before him became as familiar as the flat strike of the School clock. Out of games, he was soon lost to sight in the mysterious region of the Science Spec-

## RONALD POULTON

ialists, whom one knew only as a confused noise in the Arnold Library. The School House of those days (and of these, for all that I know) made almost a criminal offence of acquaintance with the outside world, so that one was not permitted to know him until he had climbed above the clouds into the calm air of the Sixth, where one could visit other people's houses and speak to them without the fear of prosecution. Then in the autumn of 1907, when he and Watson were double Captains of the XV like the two kings of Sparta, a new and nervous Head of the School found in the athletes his loyal and indispensable secular arm. Together we manipulated the voting of Bigside Levée, that singularly unmanageable popular assembly, whose decrees were necessary for the variation of a hat band or the purchase of a Sports cup. One appealed to him for the support of his

## STILL LIFE

smile, which carried almost more votes than his prestige, and of the big battalions of the School House ; and in return one used the authority of the Chair to get him wholly unjustifiable adjournments when the prospects of a division on his motions seemed unpromising. There was a particularly sinister occasion early in 1908, when he opposed a revolutionary proposal " that members of the Running VIII in their second year be permitted to wear a white straw hat " ; as the House looked friendly to the proposal, " the Chairman adjourned the Levée without putting the question, in view of the fact that only a small proportion of the Upper School was present " ; and a more carefully constituted House rejected the heresy five days later. His support in Sixth Levée, a Second Chamber with a deplorable tendency to independence, gave one the votes of distant

## RONALD POULTON'

Specialists and remote inhabitants of the Army Class ; and in our last year it saved the administration from defeat on a grave proposal that someone should suffer for the delightful offence of reading the Second Lesson in batting-gloves for a bet of two shillings. There was also assistance rendered in other directions ; the Upper Bench had decided to vary the intolerable calm of First Lesson with an alarm clock, which was to be set for 7.25 a.m. and placed in the little gallery round Old Sixth School. As the Upper Bench, a grave assembly of Heads of Houses and scholars elect of half a dozen Colleges, wished to swear by the card that they had not done it themselves, Poulton was brought in from the Specialists after early Chapel and persuaded to lay the mine. It exploded to time ; but the results, on balance, were disappointing.

## STILL LIFE

He seems, as one turns over memories, to have been everywhere in those days. One sees him in the winter, swerving up Bigside to score a try, as the droning chant of "School" jumped into the major key, and the crowd strained forward against the line of beating canes to follow his run up the ground; one sees him in the summer, smiling, through cricket "foreigns," which one came out of Third Lesson to look at; and in the snowy springtime of the Sports, sprinting inimitably or helping a nervous fellow-steward to adjust the insidious complications of the School revolver. He appears in light blue cricket caps, in tasselled football caps with the lining sewn full of the names of stricken fields, in hat bands of every imaginable colour and distinction; playing steward at School concerts at the end of Term in the statutory button-hole, which fags brought up in state

## RONALD POULTON

from the florist's in High Street ; and even lecturing to the Natural History Society (whose principal interest was the ecclesiastical architecture of Warwickshire in its relation to illicit smoking) on the Roman Wall, which he had learnt in the holidays with a friend among the House-masters. He was in every picture ; but no one could ever persuade him to stand in the centre of it.

## II

Oxford, which began for most of us with a dispiriting week of scholarship papers at the end of an autumn term, was not a new land for him, as he had a home and his "last school" there. But he sat for the examination at the long tables in Balliol Hall, scrambled with the rest of us for that queer afternoon tea, which the Master and Fellows gave one as a sedative with the papers, and went

## STILL LIFE

back to Rugby with the Science Exhibition that he had come to fetch.

When he came up in 1908, he went into ground-floor rooms in the Garden Quad, which were known to historians to lie near the Dean's forcing-house of First Classes, and were believed by explorers to be on the way to the Laboratory. It was the custom of those days (I am speaking of the reign of Edward VII) for men of the same year to lunch in groups. As there was a singularly unwholesome tradition that lunch was a meal consisting of marmalade and cigarettes, conversation was the staple article of diet; and the selection of one's companions became a matter of more importance than the choice of dishes. For a year he lunched with a big dark man from Rossall who talked, a round fair man from Repton who smiled, and another Rugbeian from the Front Quad who

## RONALD POULTON

made speeches. There was a rule at that table that no one should talk anyone else's "shop"; one was not permitted to know or to show that one knew that he was being tried (it was a remote age) for the University, or that the Union was debating Mr. Asquith's proposals to abolish unemployment (it was a very remote age) by the promiscuous engagement of supernumerary postmen. The sole intrusion of athletics was an occasion on which the other Rugbybeian was caught for a College Littleaside and found himself without a striped jersey; he appealed for Ronald's and made a short but striking appearance on the Master's Field in the red and white stripes of the School House with a sinister black skull and crossbones on the left breast, a singularly harrowing experience for a nature which, on the football field at least, was always retiring.



## STILL LIFE

Ronald was always (it explains his one hostility and a good proportion of his friendships) a Rugbeian. There was a dinner to an old Head-master and a tea to a new one whilst he was at Oxford, in which he was inevitably prominent; and I think that a newly-elected President of the Union was never so proud as when a canvasser (canvassing was strictly prohibited) reported ruefully that Ronald, on being reminded of a Rugbeian candidature, had almost killed him for the suggestion that he could possibly have forgotten it.

### III

I think that he was the most honest man I ever knew. If he had wished to pretend, he would not have known how to do it; and there was no affectation in him. He played games without *panache* and worked without

## RONALD POULTON

false solemnity. Some of us have hoped that he was typical of a single school; but we were wrong, because the best is never typical.

He was (it is useless to try to sketch him with a pen, and one is writing for the people who remember) himself; and there are a smile and a voice and a friend that some of them will never forget. There was a facetious undergraduate wrote of him eight years ago: "He has played for England against France, Ireland, and Scotland: as he is a member of the O.T.C., we trust he will never be required for his country against Germany." It is of no use to wish that wish now.



# WORKS BY PHILIP GUEDALLA

AUTHOR OF "PALMERSTON"

## THE SECOND EMPIRE

Bonapartism      The President

The Prince      The Emperor

## MASTERS AND MEN

## A GALLERY

---

*The Essays of Philip Guedalla are  
also published, in uniform style, in*

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON'S  
PEOPLE'S LIBRARY**

MEN OF LETTERS      Collected Essays      Vol. I

MEN OF AFFAIRS      Collected Essays      Vol. II

MEN OF WAR      Collected Essays      Vol. III

STILL LIFE      Collected Essays      Vol. IV

**HODDER AND STOUGHTON LTD.  
WARWICK SQUARE, LONDON, E.C.4**







